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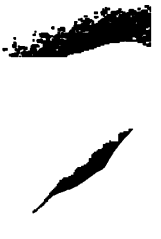

THE WOMEN OF THE CÆSARS

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BY

GUGLIELMO FERRERO

NEW YORK
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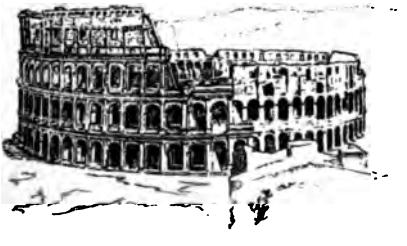

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THE WOMEN OF THE CÆSARS

THE
WOMEN OF THE CÆSARS

I

WOMAN AND MARRIAGE IN ANCIENT ROME

"MANY things that among the Greeks are considered improper and unfitting," wrote Cornelius Nepos in the preface to his "Lives," "are permitted by our customs. Is there by chance a Roman who is ashamed to take his wife to a dinner away from home? Does it happen that the mistress of the house in any family does not enter the anterooms frequented by strangers and show herself among them? Not so in Greece: there the woman accepts invitations only among families to which she is related, and she remains withdrawn in that inner part of the house which is called the *gynaeceum*, where only the nearest relatives are admitted."

This passage, one of the most significant in

all the little work of Nepos, draws in a few, clear, telling strokes one of the most marked distinctions between the Greco-Asiatic world and the Roman. Among ancient societies, the Roman was probably that in which, at least among the better classes, woman enjoyed the greatest social liberty and the greatest legal and economic autonomy. There she most nearly approached that condition of moral and civil equality with man which makes her his comrade, and not his slave—that equality in which modern civilization sees one of the supreme ends of moral progress.

The doctrine held by some philosophers and sociologists, that military peoples subordinate woman to a tyrannical régime of domestic servitude, is wholly disproved by the history of Rome. If there was ever a time when the Roman woman lived in a state of perennial tutelage, under the authority of man from birth to death—of the husband, if not of the father, or, if not of father or husband, of the guardian—that time belongs to remote antiquity.

MARRIAGE IN ANCIENT ROME

When Rome became the master state of the Mediterranean world, and especially during the last century of the republic, woman, aside from a few slight limitations of form rather than of substance, had already acquired legal and economic independence, the condition necessary for social and moral equality. As to marriage, the affianced pair could at that time choose between two different legal family régimes: marriage with *manus,* the older form, in which all the goods of the wife passed to the ownership of the husband, so that she could no longer possess anything in her own name; or marriage without *manus,* in which only the dower became the property of the husband, and the wife remained mistress of all her other belongings and all that she might acquire. Except in some cases, and for special reasons, in all the families of the aristocracy, by common consent, marriages, during the last centuries of the republic, were contracted in the later form; so that at that time married women directly and openly had gained economic independence.

During the same period, indirectly, and by means of juridical evasions, this independence was also won by unmarried women, who, according to ancient laws, ought to have remained all their lives under a guardian, either selected by the father in his will or appointed by the law in default of such selection. To get around this difficulty, the fertile and subtle imagination of the jurists invented first the *tutor optivus,* permitting the father, instead of naming his daughter's guardian in his will, to leave her free to choose one general guardian or several, according to the business in hand, or even to change that official as many times as she wished.

To give the woman means to change her legitimate guardian at pleasure, if her father had provided none by will, there was invented the *tutor cessicius,* thereby allowing the transmission of a legal guardianship. However, though all restrictions imposed upon the liberty of the unmarried woman by the institution of tutelage disappeared, one limitation continued in force—she could not make a will.

From a drawing by André Castaigne

A ROMAN MARRIAGE CUSTOM

The picture shows the bride entering her new home in the arms of the bridegroom

Yet even this was provided for, either by fictitious marriage or by the invention of the *tutor fiduciarius*. The woman, without contracting matrimony, gave herself by *coemptio* (purchase) into the *manus* of a person of her trust, on the agreement that the *coemptionator* would free her: he became her guardian in the eyes of the law.

There was, then, at the close of the republic little disparity in legal condition between the man and the woman. As is natural, to this almost complete legal equality there was united an analogous moral and social equality. The Romans never had the idea that between the *mundus muliebris* (woman's world) and that of men they must raise walls, dig ditches, put up barricades, either material or moral. They never willed, for example, to divide women from men by placing between them the ditch of ignorance. To be sure, the Roman dames of high society were for a long time little instructed, but this was because, moreover, the men distrusted Greek culture. When literature, science, and Hellenic philosophy were

admitted into the great Roman families as desired and welcome guests, neither the authority, nor the egoism, nor yet the prejudices of the men, sought to deprive women of the joy, the comfort, the light, that might come to them from these new studies. We know that many ladies in the last two centuries of the republic not only learned to dance and to sing,—common feminine studies, these,—but even learned Greek, loved literature, and dabbled in philosophy, reading its books or meeting with the famous philosophers of the Orient.

Moreover, in the home the woman was mistress, at the side of and on equality with her husband. The passage I have quoted from Nepos proves that she was not segregated, like the Greek woman: she received and enjoyed the friends of her husband, was present with them at festivals and banquets in the houses of families with whom she had friendly relations, although at such banquets she might not, like the man, recline, but must, for the sake of greater modesty, sit at table. In short, she was

not, like the Greek woman, shut up at home, a veritable prisoner.

She might go out freely; this she did generally in a litter. She was never excluded from theaters, even though the Roman government tried as best it could for a long period to temper in its people the passion for spectacular entertainments. She could frequent public places and have recourse directly to the magistrates. We have record of the assembling and of demonstrations made by the richest women of Rome in the Forum and other public places, to obtain laws and other provisions from the magistrates, like that famous demonstration of women that Livy describes as having occurred in the year 195 B.C., to secure the abolition of the Oppian Law against luxury.

What more? We have good reason for holding that already under the republic there existed at Rome a kind of woman's club, which called itself *conventus matronarum* and gathered together the dames of the great families. Finally, it is certain that many times in critical

moments the government turned directly and officially to the great ladies of Rome for help to overcome the dangers that menaced public affairs, by collecting money, or imploring with solemn religious ceremonies the favor of the gods.

One understands then, how at all times there were at Rome women much interested in public affairs. The fortunes of the powerful families, their glory, their dominance, their wealth, depended on the vicissitudes of politics and of war. The heads of these families were all statesmen, diplomats, warriors; the more intelligent and cultivated the wife, and the fonder she was of her husband, the intenser the absorption with which she must have followed the fortunes of politics, domestic and foreign; for with these were bound up many family interests, and often even the life of her husband.

Was the Roman family, then, the reader will demand at this point, in everything like the family of contemporary civilization? Have

From the statue found at Pompeii. Now in the Museo Nazionale, Naples

EUMACHIA, A PUBLIC PRIESTESS OF ANCIENT ROME

we returned upon the long trail to the point reached by our far-away forebears?

No. If there are resemblances between the modern family and the Roman, there are also crucial differences. Although the Roman was disposed to allow woman judicial and economic independence, a refined culture, and that freedom without which it is impossible to enjoy life in dignified and noble fashion, he was never ready to recognize in the way modern civilization does more or less openly, as ultimate end and reason for marriage, either the personal happiness of the contracting parties or their common personal moral development in the unifying of their characters and aspirations. The individualistic conception of matrimony and of the family attained by our civilization was alien to the Roman mind, which conceived of these from an essentially political and social point of view. The purpose of marriage was, so to speak, exterior to the pair. As untouched by any spark of the metaphysical spirit as he was unyielding—at least in action—to every suggestion of the philo-

sophic; preoccupied only in enlarging and consolidating the state of which he was master, the Roman aristocrat never regarded matrimony and the family, just as he never regarded religion and law, as other than instruments for political domination, as means for increasing and establishing the power of every great family, and by family affiliations to strengthen the association of the aristocracy, already bound together by political interest.

For this reason, although the Roman conceded many privileges and recognized many rights among women, he never went so far as to think that a woman of great family could aspire to the right of choosing her own husband. Custom, indeed, much restricted the young man also, at least in a first marriage. The choice rested with the fathers, who were accustomed to affiance their sons early, indeed when mere boys. The heads of two friendly families would find themselves daily together in the struggle of the Forum and the Comitia, or in the deliberations of the Senate. Did the idea occur to both that their chil-

dren, if affianced then, at seven or eight years of age, might cement more closely the union of the two families, then straightway the matter was definitely arranged. The little girl was brought up with the idea that some day, as soon as might be, she should marry that boy, just as for two centuries in the famous houses of Catholic countries many of the daughters were brought up in the expectation that one day they should take the veil.

Every one held this Roman practice as reasonable, useful, equitable; to no one did the idea occur that by it violence was done to the most intimate sentiment of liberty and independence that a human being can know. On the contrary, according to the common judgment, the well-governing of the state was being wisely provided for, and these alliances were destroying the seeds of discord that spontaneously germinate in aristocracy and little by little destroy it, like those plants sown by no man's hand, which thrive upon old walls and become their ruin.

This is why one knows of every famous

Roman personage how many wives he had and of what family they were. The marriage of a Roman noble was a political act, and noteworthy; because a youth, or even a mature man, connecting himself with certain families, came to assume more or less fully the political responsibilities in which, for one cause or another, they were involved. This was particularly true in the last centuries of the republic, —that is, beginning from the Gracchi,—when for the various reasons which I have set forth in my "Greatness and Decline of Rome," the Roman aristocracy divided into two inimical parties, one of which attempted to rouse against the other the interests, the ambitions, and the cupidity, of the middle and lower classes. The two parties then sought to reinforce themselves by matrimonial alliances, and these followed the ups and downs of the political struggle that covered Rome with blood. Of this fact the story of Julius Cæsar is a most curious proof.

The prime reason for Julius Cæsar's becoming the chief of the popular party is to be found

neither in his ambitions nor in his temperament, and even less in his political opinions, but in his relationship to Marius. An aunt of Cæsar had married Caius Marius, the modest bankrupt farmer of revenues, who, having entered politics, had become the first general of his time, had been elected consul six times, and had conquered Jugurtha, the Cimbri, and the Teutons. The self-made man had become famous and rich, and in the face of an aristocracy proud of its ancestors, had tried to ennoble his obscure origin by taking his wife from an ancient and most noble, albeit impoverished and decayed, patrician family.

But when there broke out the revolution in which Marius placed himself at the head of the popular party, and the revolution was overcome by Sulla, the old aristocracy, which had conquered with Sulla, did not forgive the patrician family of the Julii for having connected itself with that bitter foe, who had made so much mischief. Consequently, during the period of the reaction, all its members were looked upon askance, and were suspected and

persecuted, among them young Cæsar, who was in no way responsible for the deeds of his uncle, since he was only a lad during the war between Sulla and Marius.

This explains how it was that the first wife of Cæsar, Cossutia, was the daughter of a knight; that is, of a financier and revenue-farmer. For a young man belonging to a family of ancient senatorial nobility, this marriage was little short of a *mésalliance;* but Cæsar had been engaged to this girl when still a very young man, at the time when, the alliance between Marius and the knights being still firm and strong, the marriage of a rich knight's daughter would mean to the nephew of Marius, not only a considerable fortune, but also the support of the social class which at that moment was predominant. For reasons unknown to us, Cæsar soon repudiated Cossutia, and before the downfall of the democratic party he was married to Cornelia, who was the daughter of Cinna, the democratic consul and a most distinguished member of the party of Marius. This second marriage, the causes of which

From a drawing by André Castaigne

must be sought for in the political status of Cæsar's family, was the cause of his first political reverses. For Sulla tried to force Cæsar to repudiate Cornelia, and in consequence of his refusal, he came to be considered an enemy by Sulla and his party and was treated accordingly.

It is known that Cornelia died when still very young, after only a few years of married life, and that Cæsar's third marriage in the year 68 B.C., was quite different from his first and second, since the third wife, Pompeia, belonged to one of the noblest families of the conservative aristocracy—was, in fact, a niece of Sulla. How could the nephew of Marius, who had escaped as by miracle the proscriptions of Sulla, ever have married the latter's niece? Because in the dozen years intervening between 80 and 68, the political situation had gradually grown calmer, and a new air of conciliation had begun to blow through the city, troubled by so much confusion, burying in oblivion the bloodiest records of the civil war, calling into fresh life admiration for Marius, that hero who

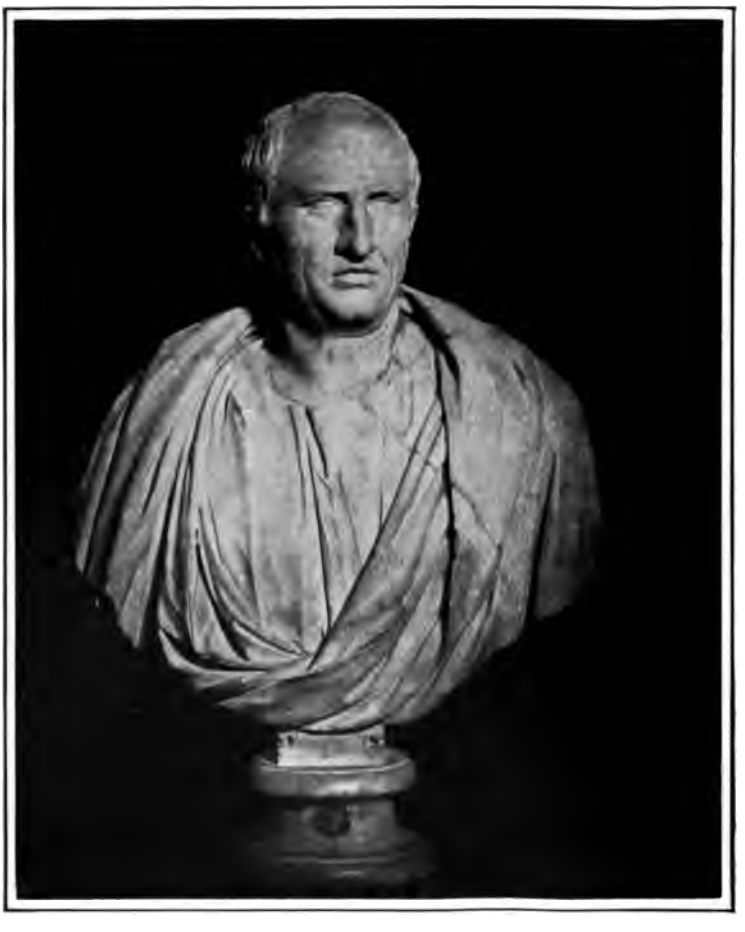
had conquered the Cimbri and the Teutons. In that moment, to be a nephew of Marius was no longer a crime among any of the great families; for some, on the contrary, it was coming to be the beginning of glory. But that situation was short-lived. After a brief truce, the two parties again took up a bitter war, and for his fourth wife Cæsar chose Calpurnia, the daughter of Lucius Calpurnius Piso, consul in 58, and a most influential senator of the popular party.

Whoever studies the history of the influential personages of Cæsar's time, will find that their marriages follow the fortunes of the political situation. Where a purely political reason was wanting, there was the economic. A woman could aid powerfully a political career in two ways: by ably administering the household and by contributing to its expenses her dower or her personal fortune. Although the Romans gave their daughters an education relatively advanced, they never forgot to inculcate in them the idea that it was the duty of a woman, especially if she was nobly born, to know all

the arts of good housewifery, and especially, as most important, spinning and weaving. The reason for this lay in the fact that for the aristocratic families, who were in possession of vast lands and many flocks, it was easy to provide themselves from their own estates with the wool necessary to clothe all their household, from masters to the numerous retinue of slaves. If the *materfamilias* knew sufficiently well the arts of spinning and weaving to be able to organize in the home a small "factory" of slaves engaged in such tasks, and knew how to direct and survey them, to make them work with zeal and without theft, she could provide the clothing for the whole household, thus saving the heavy expense of buying the stuffs from a merchant—notable economy in times when money was scarce and every family tried to make as little use of it as possible. The *materfamilias* held, then, in every home, a prime industrial office, that of clothing the entire household, and in proportion to her usefulness in this office was she able to aid or injure the family.

More important still were the woman's dower and her personal fortune. The Romans not only considered it perfectly honorable, sagacious, and praiseworthy for a member of the political aristocracy to marry a rich woman for her wealth, the better to maintain the luster of his rank, or the more easily to fulfil his particular political and social duties, but they also believed there could be no better luck or greater honor for a rich woman than for this reason to marry a prominent man. They exacted only that she be of respectable habits, and even in this regard it appears that, during certain tumultuous periods, they sometimes shut one eye.

Tradition says, for example, that Sulla, born of a noble family, quite in ruin, owed his money to the bequest of a Greek woman whose wealth had the most impure origin that the possessions of a woman can possibly have. Is this tradition only the invention of the enemies of the terrible dictator? In any event, how people of good standing felt in this matter in normal times is shown by the life of Cicero.



THE SO-CALLED BUST OF CICERO

All but the head is modern. Now in the Museo Capitolino; it was formerly in the Palazzo Barberini.

Cicero was born at Arpino, of a knightly family, highly respectable, and well educated, but not rich. That he was able to pursue his brilliant forensic and political career, was chiefly due to his marriage to Terentia, who, although not very rich, had more than he, and by her fortune enabled him to live at Rome. But it is well known that after long living together happily enough, as far as can be judged, Cicero and Terentia, already old, fell into discord and in 46 B.C. ended by being divorced. The reasons for the divorce are not exactly clear, but from Cicero's letters it appears that financial motives and disputes were not wanting. It seems that during the civil wars Terentia refused to help Cicero with her money to the extent he desired; that is to say, at some tremendous moment of those turbulent years she was unwilling to risk all her patrimony on the uncertain political fortune of her husband.

Cicero's divorce, obliging him to return the dower, reduced him to the gravest straits, from which he emerged through another marriage.

He was the guardian of an exceedingly rich young woman, named Publilia, and one fine day, at the age of sixty-three, he joined hands with this seventeen-year-old girl, whose possessions were to rehabilitate the great writer.

THIS conception of matrimony and of the family may seem unromantic, prosaic, materialistic; but we must not suppose that because of it the Romans failed to experience the tenderest and sweetest affections of the human heart. The letters of Cicero himself show how tenderly even Romans could love wife and children. Although they distrusted and combatted as dangerous to the prosperity and well-being of the state those dearest and gentlest personal affections that in our times literature, music, religion, philosophy, and custom have educated, encouraged, and exalted, as one of the supreme fountains of civil life, should we therefore reckon them barbarians? We must not forget the great diversity between our times and theirs. The confidence which modern men repose in love as a principle, in its

ultimate wisdom, in its beneficial influence on the affairs of the world; in the idea that every man has the right to choose for himself the person of the opposite sex toward whom the liveliest and strongest personal attraction impels him—these are the supreme blossoms of modern individualism, the roots of which have been able to fasten only in the rich soil of modern civilization.

The great ease of living that we now enjoy, the lofty intellectual development of our day, permit us to relax the severe discipline that poorer times and peoples, constrained to lead a harder life, had to impose upon themselves. Although the habit may seem hard and barbarous, certainly almost all the great peoples of the past, and the majority of those contemporary who live outside our civilization, have conceived and practised matrimony not as a right of sentiment, but as a duty of reason. To fulfil it, the young have turned to the sagacity of the aged, and these have endeavored to promote the success of marriage not merely to the satisfaction of a single passion, usually as brief

as it is ardent, but according to a calculated equilibrium of qualities, tendencies, and material means.

The principles regulating Roman marriage may seem to us at variance with human nature, but they are the principles to which all peoples wishing to trust the establishment of the family not to passion as mobile as the sea, but to reason, have had recourse in times when the family was an organism far more essential than it is to-day, because it held within itself many functions, educational, industrial, and political, now performed by other institutions. But reason itself is not perfect. Like passion, it has its weakness, and marriage so conceived by Rome produced grave inconveniences, which one must know in order to understand the story, in many respects tragic, of the women of the Cæsars.

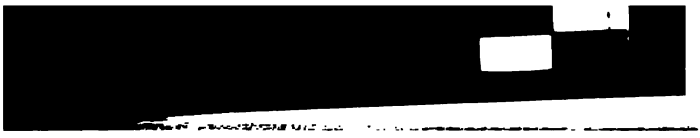
The first difficulty was the early age at which marriages took place among the aristocracy. The boys were almost always married at from eighteen to twenty; the girls, at from thirteen to fifteen. This disadvantage is to be found

in all society in which marriage is arranged by the parents, because it would be next to impossible to induce young people to yield to the will of their elders in an affair in which the passions are readily aroused if they were allowed to reach the age when the passions are strongest and the will has become independent. Hardly out of childhood, the man and the woman are naturally more tractable. On the other hand, it is easy to see how many dangers threatened such youthful marriages in a society where matrimony gave to the woman wide liberty, placing her in contact with other men, opening to her the doors of theaters and public resorts, leading her into the midst of all the temptations and illusions of life.

The other serious disadvantage was the facility of divorce. For the very reason that matrimony was for the nobility a political act, the Romans were never willing to allow that it could be indissoluble; indeed, even when the woman was in no sense culpable, they reserved to the man the right of undoing it at any time he wished, solely because that particular mar-

riage did not suit his political interests. And the marriage could be dissolved by the most expeditious means, without formality—by a mere letter! Nor was that enough. Fearing that love might outweigh reason and calculation in the young, the law granted to the father the right to give notice of divorce to the daughter-in-law, instead of leaving it to the son; so that the father was able to make and unmake the marriages of his sons, as he thought useful and fitting, without taking their will into account.

The woman, therefore, although in the home she was of sovereign equality with the man and enjoyed a position full of honor, was, notwithstanding, never sure of the future. Neither the affection of her husband nor the stainlessness of her life could insure that she should close her days in the house whither she had come in her youth as a bride. At any hour the fatalities of politics could, I will not say, drive her forth, but gently invite her exit from the house where her children were born. An ordinary letter was enough to annul a marriage.



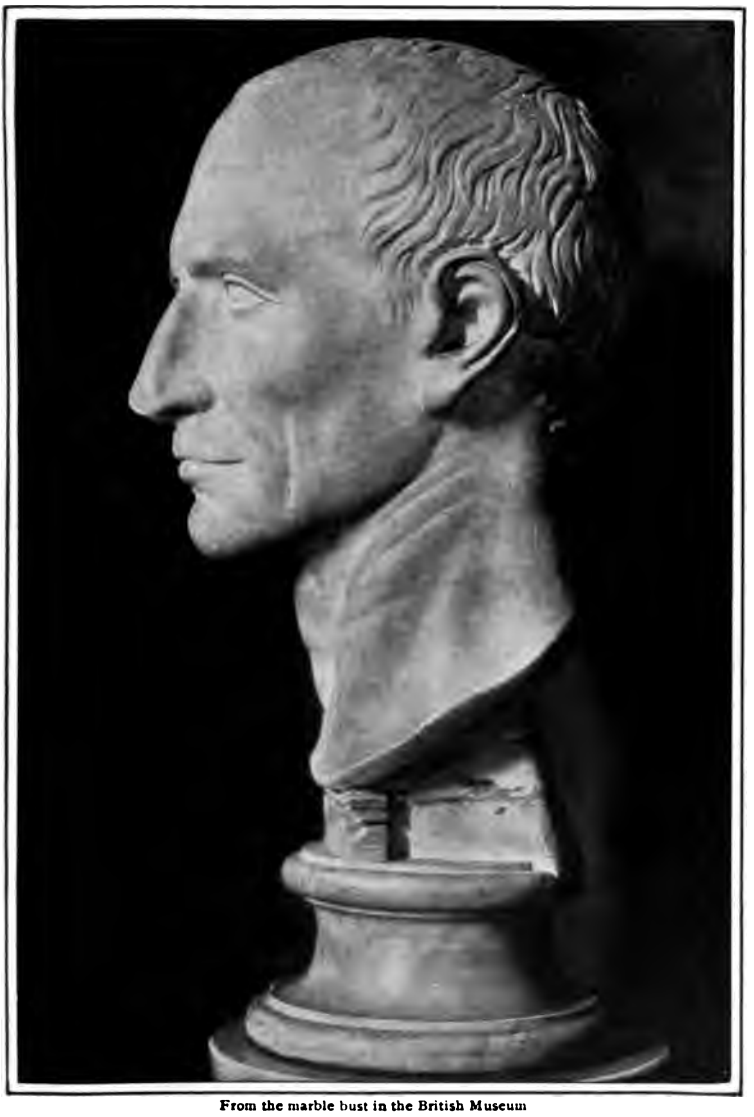
So it was that, particularly in the age of Cæsar, when politics were much perturbed and shifting, there were not a few women of the aristocracy who had changed husbands three or four times, and that not for lightness or caprice or inconstancy of tastes, but because their fathers, their brothers, sometimes their sons, had at a certain moment besought or constrained them to contract some particular marriage that should serve their own political ends.

It is easy to comprehend how this precariousness discouraged woman from austere and rigorous virtues, the very foundation of the family; how it was a continuous incitement to frivolity of character, to dissipation, to infidelity. Consequently, the liberty the Romans allowed her must have been much more dangerous than the greater freedom she enjoys today, since it lacked its modern checks and balances, such as personal choice in marriage, the relatively mature age at which marriages are nowadays made, the indissolubility of the matrimonial contract, or, rather, the many and diverse restrictions placed upon divorce, by

which it is no longer left to the arbitrary will or the mere fancy of the man.

In brief, there was in the constitution of the Roman family a contradiction, which must be well apprehended if one would understand the history of the great ladies of the imperial era. Rome desired woman in marriage to be the pliable instrument of the interests of the family and the state, but did not place her under the despotism of customs, of law, and of the will of man in the way done by all other states that have exacted from her complete self-abnegation. Instead, it accorded to her almost wholly that liberty, granted with little danger by civilizations like ours, in which she may live not only for the family, for the state, for the race, but also for herself. Rome was unwilling to treat her as did the Greek and Asiatic world, but it did not on this account give up requiring of her the same total self-abnegation for the public weal, the utter obliviousness to her own aspirations and passions, in behalf of the race.

This contradiction explains to us one of the fundamental phenomena of the history of



From the marble bust in the British Museum

JULIUS CÆSAR

Rome—the deep, tenacious, age-long puritanism of high Roman society. Puritanism was the chief expedient by which Rome attempted to solve the contradiction. That coercion which the Oriental world had tried to exercise upon woman by segregating her, keeping her ignorant, terrorizing her with threats and punishments, Rome sought to secure by training. It inculcated in every way by means of education, religion, and opinion the idea that she should be pious, chaste, faithful, devoted alone to her husband and children; that luxury, prodigality, dissoluteness, were horrible vices, the infamy of which hopelessly degraded all that was best and purest in woman. It tried to protect the minds of both men and women from all those influences of art, literature, and religion which might tend to arouse the personal instinct and the longing for love; and for a long time it distrusted, withstood, and almost sought to disguise the mythology, the arts, and the literature of Greece, as well as many of the Asiatic religions, imbued as they were with an erotic spirit of subtle enticement.

Puritanism is essentially an intense effort to rouse in the mind the liveliest repulsion for certain vices and pleasures, and a violent dread of them; and Rome made use of it to check and counterbalance the liberty of woman, to impede and render more difficult the abuses of such liberty, particularly prodigality and dissoluteness.

It is therefore easy to understand how this puritanism was a thing serious, weighty, and terrible, in Roman life; and how from it could be born the tragedies we have to recount. It was the chief means of solving one of the gravest problems that has perplexed all civilizations—the problem of woman and her freedom, a problem earnest, difficult, and complex which springs up everywhere out of the unobstructed anarchy and the tremendous material prosperity of the modern world. And the difficulty of the problem consists, above all, in this: that, although it is a hard, cruel, plainly iniquitous thing to deprive a woman of liberty and subject her to a régime of tyranny in order to constrain her to live for the race and not for

herself, yet when liberty is granted her to live for herself, to satisfy her personal desires, she abuses that liberty more readily than a man does, and more than a man forgets her duties toward the race.

She abuses it more readily for two reasons: because she exercises a greater power over man than he over her; and because, in the wealthier classes, she is freer from the political and economic responsibilities that bind the man. However unbridled the freedom that man enjoys, however vast his egoism, he is always constrained in a certain measure to check his selfish instincts by the need of conserving, enlarging, and defending against rivals his social, economic, and political situation.

But the woman? If she is freed from family cares, if she is authorized to live for her own gratification and for her beauty; if the opinion that imposes upon her, on pain of infamy, habits pure and honest, weakens; if, instead of infamy, dissoluteness brings her glory, riches, homage, what trammel can still restrain in her

the selfish instincts latent in every human being? She runs the mighty danger of changing into an irresponsible being who will be the more admired and courted and possessed of power—at least as long as her beauty lasts—the more she ignores every duty, subordinating all good sense to her own pleasure.

This is the reason why woman, in periods commanded by strong social discipline, is the most beneficent and tenacious among the cohesive forces of a nation; and why, in times when social discipline is relaxed, she is, instead, through ruinous luxury, dissipation, and voluntary sterility, the most terrible force for dissolution.

One of the greatest problems of every epoch and all civilizations is to find a balance between the natural aspiration for freedom that is none other than the need of personal felicity —a need as lively and profound in the heart of woman as of man—and the supreme necessity for a discipline without which the race, the state, and the family run the gravest danger. Yet this problem to-day, in the unmeasured

From the statue found in the theater of Herculaneum
Now in the Museo Nazionale, Naples

THE SISTER OF M. NONIUS BALBUS

exhilaration with which riches and power intoxicate the European-American civilization, is considered with the superficial frivolity and the voluble dilettantism that despoil or confuse all the great problems of esthetics, philosophy, statesmanship, and morality. We live in the midst of what might be called the Saturnalia of the world's history; and in the midst of the swift and easy labor, the inebriety of our continual festivities, we feel no more the tragic in life. This short history of the women of the Cæsars will set before the eyes of this pleasure-loving contemporary age tragedies among whose ruins our ancestors lived from birth to death, and by which they tempered their minds.

II

LIVIA AND JULIA

IN the year 38 B.C. it suddenly became known at Rome that C. Julius Cæsar Octavianus (afterward the Emperor Augustus), one of the triumvirs of the republic, and colleague of Mark Antony and Lepidus in the military dictatorship established after the death of Cæsar, had sent up for decision to the pontifical college, the highest religious authority of the state, a curious question. It was this: Might a divorced woman who was expecting to become a mother contract a marriage with another man before the birth of her child? The pontifical college replied that if there still was doubt about the fact the new marriage would not be permissible; but if it was certain, there would be no impediment. A few days later, it was learned that Octavianus had divorced his wife Scribonia and had married Livia, a young woman of nineteen. Livia's physical condi-

tion was precisely that concerning which the pontiffs had been asked to decide, and in order to enter into this marriage she had obtained a divorce from Tiberius Claudius Nero.

The two divorces and the new marriage were concluded with unwonted haste. The first husband of Livia, acting the part of a father, gave her a dowry for her new alliance and was present at the wedding. Thus Livia suddenly passed into the house of her new husband, where, three months later, she gave birth to a son, who was called Drusus Claudius Nero. This child Octavianus immediately sent to the house of its father.

To us, marriage customs of this sort seem brutal, shameless, and almost ridiculous. We should infer that a woman who lent herself to such barter and exchange must be a person of light manners and of immoral inclinations. At Rome, however, no one would have been amazed at such a marriage or at the procedure adopted, had it not been for the extraordinary haste, which seemed to indicate that it was undesirable or impossible to wait until Livia

should have given birth to her child, and which made it necessary to trouble the pontifical college for its somewhat sophistical consent. For all were accustomed to seeing the marriages of great personages made and unmade in this manner and on such bases. Why, then, were these nuptials so precipitately concluded, apparently with the consent of all concerned? Why did they all, Livia and Octavianus not less than Tiberius Claudius Nero, seem so impatient that everything should be settled with despatch?

The legend which then formed about the family of Augustus, a legend hostile at almost every point, has interpreted this marriage as a tyrannical act, virtually an abduction, by the dissolute and perverse triumvir. I, too, in my "Greatness and Decline of Rome" expressed my belief that this haste, at least, was the effect not of political motives but of a passionate love inspired in the young triumvir by the very beautiful Livia. A longer reflection upon this episode has persuaded me, however, that there is another manner, less poetic perhaps, but

From the statue in Naples

LIVIA, THE MOTHER OF TIBERIUS, IN THE COSTUME OF A PRIESTESS

more Roman, of explaining, at least in part, this famous alliance, which was to have so great an importance in the history of Rome.

To arrive at the motives of this marriage we must consider who was Livia and who was Octavianus. Livia was a woman of great beauty, as her portraits prove. But this was not all. She belonged also to two of the most ancient and conspicuous families of the Roman nobility. Her father, Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus, was by birth a Claudius, adopted by a Livius Drusus. He was descended from Appius the Blind, the famous censor and perhaps the most illustrious personage of the ancient republic. His grandfather, his great-grandfather, and his great-great-grandfather had been consuls, and consuls and censors may be found in the collateral branches of the family. A sister of his grandfather had been the wife of Tiberius Gracchus; a cousin of his father had married Lucullus, the great general. He came, therefore, of one of the most ancient and glorious families. Not less noble was the family of the Livii Drusi who had adopted him.

It counted eight consulships, two censorships, three triumphs, and one dictatorship. Thus the father of Livia belonged by birth and adoption to two of those ancient, aristocratic families which for a long time and even in the midst of the most tremendous revolutions the people had venerated as semi-divine and into whose story was interwoven the history of the great republic. Nor had the first husband given to Livia been less noble, for Tiberius Claudius Nero was descended like Livia from Appius the Blind, though through another son of the great censor. In Livia was concentrated the quintessence of the great Roman aristocracy: she was at Rome what in London to-day the daughter of the Duke of Westminster or the Duke of Bedford would be, and her noble rank explains the rôle which her family had played during the Civil War. In the great revolution which broke out after the death of Cæsar, the father of Livia in the year 43 had been proscribed by the triumvirs; he had fought with Brutus and Cassius and had died by his own hand after Philippi. In 40, after the Perusinian war and

only two years before Livia's marriage with Octavianus, Tiberius Claudius Nero and Livia had been forced to flee from Italy in fear of the vengeance of Octavianus.

Who on the other hand was Octavianus? A parvenu, with a nobility altogether too recent! His grandfather was a rich usurer of Velitrae (now Velletri), a financier and a man of affairs; it was only his immediate father who succeeded by dint of the riches of the usurer grandfather in entering the Roman nobility. He had married a sister of Cæsar and, though still young when he died, had become a senator and pretor. Octavianus was, therefore, the descendant, as we should express it in Europe to-day, of rich bourgeois recently ennobled. Although by adopting him in his will Cæsar had given him his name, that of an ancient patrician family, the modest origin of Octavianus and the trade of his grandfather were known to everybody. In a country like Rome, where, notwithstanding revolutions, the old nobility was still highly venerated by the people and formed a closed caste, jealous of its

exclusive pride of ancestry, this obscurity of origin was a handicap and a danger, especially when Octavianus had as colleagues Antony and Lepidus, who could boast a much more ancient and illustrious origin than his own.

We can readily explain, therefore, even without admitting that Livia had aroused in him a violent passion, why the future Augustus should have been so impatient to marry her in 38 B.C. The times were stormy and uncertain; the youthful triumvir, whom a caprice of fortune had raised to the head of a revolutionary dictatorship, was certainly the weakest of the three colleagues, because of his youth, his slighter experience, the feebler prestige among his soldiers, and, last of all, the greater obscurity of his lineage. Antony, especially, who had fought in so many wars, with Cæsar and alone, who belonged to a family of really ancient nobility, was much more popular than he among the soldiers and had stronger relations with the great families. He was therefore more powerful than Octavianus both in high places and in low. A marriage with Livia

meant much to the future Augustus. It would open for him a door into the old aristocracy; it would draw him closer to those families which, in spite of the revolution, were still so influential and venerable; it would be the means of lessening the hatred, contempt, and distrust in which these families held him. It was for him what Napoleon's marriage with Marie Louise and the consequent connection with the imperial family of Austria had been for the former Corsican officer, become Emperor of the French. Since, now, a lady who belonged to one of these great families was disposed to marry him, it would have been foolish to put obstacles in the way; it was necessary to act with despatch; time and fortune might change.

Such are the motives that may have induced Augustus to hasten the nuptials. But what were the motives of Livia in accepting this marriage, in such stormy times, when the fortunes of the future Augustus were still so uncertain? A passage in Velleius Paterculus would lead us to believe that he who devised

this historic marriage was none other than that same first husband of Livia, Tiberius Claudius Nero himself! According to our ideas it is inconceivable; but not at all strange according to the ideas of the Roman. It is probable that Tiberius Claudius Nero, feeling that the triumph of the revolution was now assured, had wished by this marriage to attach to the cause of the old aristocracy the youngest of the three revolutionary leaders. Already well along in years and infirm,—he was to die shortly after,—Nero, who well knew the intelligence of his young wife, was perhaps planning to place her in the house of the man in whom all saw one of the future lords of Rome. Thus he would bind him to the interests of the aristocracy. In the person of Livia there entered into the house of Octavianus the old Roman nobility, which, defeated at Philippi, was striving to reacquire through the prestige and the cleverness of a woman what it had not been able to maintain by arms.

All her life long, with constancy, moderation, and wonderful tact, Livia fulfilled her mission.

She succeeded in resolving into the admirable harmony of a long existence that contradiction between the liberty conceded to her sex and the self-denial demanded of it by man as a duty. She was assuredly one of the most perfect models of that lady of high society whom the Romans in all the years of their long and tempestuous history never ceased to admire. Even and serene, completely mistress of herself and of her passions, endowed with a robust will, she accommodated herself without difficulty to all the sacrifices which her rank and situation imposed upon her. She changed husbands without repugnance, though her marriage to Octavianus occurred but five years after the proscriptions, while he was still red with the blood of her family and friends. Likewise she renounced her two sons, the future emperor Tiberius, who had been born before her second marriage, as well as the one who had been born after. So too when, a few years later, Tiberius Claudius Nero died, appointing Augustus their guardian, with equal serenity she took them back and educated them with the

most careful motherly solicitude. To the second husband, whom politics had given her, she was a faithful companion. Scandal imputed to her absurd poisonings which she did not commit, and accused her of insatiable ambitions and perfidious intrigues. No one ever dared accuse her of infidelity to Augustus or of dissolute conduct. The great fame, power, and wealth of her husband did not disturb the calm poise of her spirit. In that palace of Augustus, adorned with triumphal laurel, toward which the eyes of the subjects were turned from every part of the empire, in that palace where, in little councils with the most eminent men of the senate, were debated the supreme interests of the world,—laws and elections, wars and peace,—she preserved the beautiful traditions of simplicity and industry. These she had learned as a child in the house of her father,—a house as much more illustrious with inherited glory as it was poorer in wealth than that which Victory had prepared for Augustus on the Palatine.

We know—it is Suetonius who tells us—that

From a photograph by Brogi of the marble bust now in the Vatican

THE YOUNG AUGUSTUS

this house on the Palatine built by Augustus, in which Livia spent the larger part of her life, was small and not at all luxurious. In it there was not a single piece of marble nor a precious mosaic; for forty years Augustus slept in the same bedchamber, and the furniture of the house was so simple that in the second century of our era it was exhibited to the public as an extraordinary curiosity. The imperial pair had several villas, at Lanuvium, at Palestrina, at Tivoli, but all of them were unpretentious and simple. Nor was there any more pomp and ceremony about the dinners to which they invited the conspicuous personages of Rome, the dignitaries of the state and the heads of the great families. Only on very special occasions were six courses served; usually there were but three. Moreover, Augustus never wore any other togas than those woven by Livia; woven not indeed and altogether by Livia's hands,—though she did not disdain, now and then, to work the loom,—but by her slaves and freedwomen. Faithful to the traditions of the aristocracy, Livia counted it among her duties per-

sonally to direct the weaving-rooms which were in the house. As she carefully parceled out the wool to the slaves, watching over them lest they steal or waste it, and frequently taking her place among them while they were at work, she felt that she too contributed to the prosperity and the glory of the empire.

Simplicity, loyalty, industry, an absolute surrender of one's own personality to the family and its interests,—these, in the great families, were the traditional feminine virtues which lived again in Livia to the admiration of her contemporaries. But with these virtues were associated also the need and the pride of participating in the affairs and work of her husband, that interest in politics which had been common to the intelligent women of the nobility. No one at Rome was astonished, especially in the upper classes, that Livia should occupy herself actively with politics; that Augustus should frequently come to her for counsel, or that he should not make any serious decision without having consulted her; that, in short, she should at the same time at-

tend to her husband's clothes and aid him in governing the empire. For so had done from time immemorial all the great ladies of the aristocracy, mindful of their good repute and the prosperity of their families. And Livia must have tried the more earnestly to fulfil all that her education had taught her to consider a sacred duty, since to a woman of her old-fashioned breeding the times must have appeared especially difficult and perilous.

The civil wars had greatly reduced in numbers the historic aristocracy of Rome, and the peace which followed after so long a time and which had been so anxiously invoked, very soon began to threaten the prosperity of the remnant of that nobility with a more insidious but more inevitable ruin. About 18 B.C., when Livia was approaching her fortieth year, the men of the new generation who had not seen the civil wars, for when these ended they were either unborn or only in their infancy, were already beginning to come to the front. They brought with them a previously unknown spirit of luxury, of enjoyment, of dissipation,

of rebellion against discipline, of egotism and fondness for the new, which rendered very difficult, not to say impossible, the continuation of the aristocratic régime. Women submitted with more and more repugnance to those obligatory marriages, arranged for reasons of state, which had formerly been the tradition and the sure bulwark of dominion for the aristocracy. The increase of celibacy was rendering sterile the most celebrated stocks; the most lamentable vices and disorders became tolerated and common in the most illustrious families, and ruinous habits of extravagance spread generally among that aristocracy, once so simple and austere. All this had grown up after the conquest of Egypt, which had established more points of contact with the East; and it increased in proportion as those industries and the commerce in articles of luxury which had flourished at Alexandria under the Ptolemies were gradually transplanted to Rome, where the merchants hoped to establish among their conquerors the clientele which had been lost with the fall of the

THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS

This statue was found in 1910 in the Via Labicana, not far from the Colosseum

Kingdom of the Nile. The ladies especially took up with the new oriental customs, and, preferring expensive stuffs and jewels, turned from the loom, which Livia had wished to preserve as the emblem of womanhood. Many young men of the great families were beginning to show a distaste for the army, for the government of the state, for jurisprudence, for all those activities which had been the jealous privilege of the nobility of the past. One gave himself up to literary pursuits, another cultivated philosophy, another busied himself only with the increase of his inherited fortune, while another lived only in pleasure and idleness. So it happened that there began to appear descendants of great houses who refused to be senators; every year an effort had to be made to find a sufficient number of candidates for the more numerous positions like the questorship, and in the army it was no easy matter to fill all the posts of the superior officers which were reserved for members of the nobility.

The Roman aristocracy then, that glorious

Roman aristocracy which had escaped the massacres of the proscriptions and of Philippi, ran grave danger of dying out through a species of slow suicide, if energetic measures were not taken to supply the necessary remedies. It is certain that Livia had a conspicuous part in the policy of restoring the aristocracy, to which Augustus was impelled by the old nobility, especially toward the year 18 B.C., when with this purpose in view he proposed his famous social laws. The *Lex de maritandis ordinibus* attempted by various penalties and promises to constrain the members of the aristocracy to contract marriage and to found a family, thus combatting the increasing inclination to celibacy and sterility. The *Lex de adulteriis* aimed to reëstablish order and virtue in the family, by threatening the unfaithful wife and her accomplice with exile for life and the confiscation of a part of their substance. It obliged the husband to expose the crime to the tribunals; if the husband could not or would not make the accusation, it provided that the father should do so; and in case both husband

and father failed, it authorized any citizen to step forth as accuser. Finally the *Lex sumptuaria* was designed to restrain the extravagance of wealthy families, particularly that of the women, prohibiting them from spending too large a part of the family fortune in jewels, apparel, body slaves, festivities, or buildings, especially in the building of sumptuous villas, then a growing fashion. In short, it was the purpose of these laws to bring the ladies of the Roman aristocracy to a course of conduct patterned upon the example of Livia. In the protracted discussions concerning these laws, which took place in the senate, Augustus on one occasion made a long speech in which he cited Livia as a model for the ladies of Rome. He set forth minutely the details of her household administration, telling how she lived, what relations she had with outsiders, what amusements she thought proper for a person of her rank, how she dressed and at what expense. And no one in the senate judged it unworthy of the greatness of the state or contrary to custom thus to introduce the name and

person of a great lady into the public discussion of so serious a matter of governmental policy.

Livia, then, about 18 B.C. personified in the eyes of the Romans the perfect type of aristocratic great lady created by long tradition. Having been safely preserved by good fortune through the long civil wars, this model was now set back again upon a fitting pedestal in the most powerful and richest family of the empire. She was the living example of all the virtues which the Romans most cherished, a beloved wife and a heeded counselor to the head of the state, honored with that veneration which power, virtue, nobility of birth, and the dignified beauty of face and figure drew from every one; furthermore, there were her two sons, Tiberius and Drusus, both intelligent, handsome, full of activity, docile to the traditional education which she sought to give them in order that they might be the worthy continuators of the great name they bore. Livia, with all this in her favor, might have been expected to live a happy and tranquil life, serenely to

Enlarged from the original owned by Professor G. N. Olcott

A SILVER DENARIUS OF THE SECOND TRIUMVIRATE

The portrait at the right (obverse) is of Cæsar Octavianus (Augustus), with a slight beard to indicate mourning, and at the left (reverse), of Mark Antony. The date is 41 B.C.

Enlarged from the original owned by Professor G. N. Olcott

SILVER COIN BEARING THE HEAD OF JULIUS CÆSAR

This coin, a denarius, worth about seventeen cents, represents Cæsar as Pontifex Maximus. Together with all the other Roman coins bearing Cæsar's image, it was struck in the year before his death—44-45 B. C. The fact that Cæsar placed his image on these coins may have strengthened the suspicion of his enemies that he wished to make himself king

fulfil her mission amid the admiration of the world.

But opposition and difficulties sprang up in her own family. In 39 B.C. Augustus had had by Scribonia a daughter, Julia. Following in the government of his family, as in so large a part of his politics, the traditions of the old nobility, Augustus gave his daughter in marriage when very young,—she was not yet past seventeen,—just as he early gave wives to Livia's two sons, whose guardian he was. In each case in order to assure within his circle harmony and power, he chose the consort in his own family or from among his friends. To Tiberius he gave Agrippina, a daughter of Agrippa, his close friend and most faithful collaborator; to Drusus he gave Antonia, the younger daughter of Mark Antony and Octavia, sister of Augustus. To Julia he gave Marcellus, his nephew, the son of Octavia and her first husband. But while the marriages of Drusus and Tiberius proved successful and the two couples lived lovingly and happily, such was not the case with the marriage of Julia and

Marcellus. As a result, disagreeable misunderstandings and rancors soon made themselves felt in the family. We do not know exactly what were the causes of these disagreements. It seems that Marcellus, under the influence of Julia, assumed a tone somewhat too haughty and insolent, such as was not becoming in a youth who, although the nephew of Augustus, was still taking his first steps in his political career; and it seems too that this conduct of his was especially offensive to Agrippa, who, next to Augustus, was the first person in the empire.

In short, at seventeen, Julia desired that her husband should be the second personage of the state in order that she might come immediately after Livia or even be placed directly on an equality with her. According to the Roman ideas of the family and of its discipline, this was a precocious and excessive ambition, unbecoming a matron, much less a young girl. For the duty of the woman was to follow faithfully and submissively the ambitions of her lord and not to impart to him her

own ambitions or make him her tool. In contrast to Livia, who was so docile and placid in her respect for the older traditions of the aristocracy, so firm and strong in her observance of the duties, not infrequently grievous and difficult, which this tradition imposed, Julia represented the woman of that new generation which had grown up in the times of peace—a type more rebellious against tradition, less resigned to the serious duties and difficult renunciations of rank; much more inclined to enjoy its prerogatives than disposed to bear that heavy burden of obligations and sacrifices with which the previous generations had balanced privilege. Beautiful and intelligent, even in the early years of her first marriage she showed a great passion for studies, and a fine artistic and literary taste, and with these a lively inclination toward luxury and display which hardly suited with the spirit or the letter of the *Lex sumptuaria* which her father had carried through in that year. But fraught with greater danger than all this was her ardent and passionate temperament, which both in

the family and in politics was altogether too frequently to drive her to desire and to carry through that which, rightly or wrongly, was forbidden to a woman by law, custom, and public opinion.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that a young woman endowed with so fiery and ambitious a nature did not become in the hands of Augustus as docile a political instrument as Livia. Julia wished to live for herself and for her pleasure, not for the political greatness of her father; and indeed, Augustus, who had a fine knowledge of men, was so impressed by this first unhappy experiment that when Marcellus, still a very young man, died in 23 B.C., he hesitated a long time before remarrying the youthful widow. For a moment, indeed, he did think of bestowing her not upon a senator but upon a knight, that is, a person outside of the political aristocracy, evidently with the intention of stifling her too eager ambitions by taking from her all means and hope of satisfying them. Then he decided upon the opposite expedient, that of quieting those ambitions

by entirely satisfying them, and so gave Julia, in 21 B.C., to Agrippa, who had been the cause of the earlier difficulties. Agrippa was twenty-four years older than she and could have been her father, but he was in truth the second person of the empire in glory, riches, and power. Soon after, in 18 B.C., he was to become the colleague of Augustus in the presidency of the republic and consequently his equal in every way.

Thus Julia suddenly saw her ambitions gratified. She became at twenty-one the next lady of the empire after Livia, and perhaps even the first in company with and beside her. Young, beautiful, intelligent, cultured, and loving luxury, she represented at Livia's side and in opposition to her, the trend of the new generation in which was growing the determination to free itself from tradition. She lavished money generously, and there soon formed about her a sort of court, a party, a coterie, in which figured the fairest names of the Roman aristocracy. Her name and her person became popular even among the common people of Rome, to whom the name of the

Julii was more sympathetic than that of the Claudii, which was borne by the sons of Livia. The combined popularity of Augustus and of Agrippa was reflected in her. It may be said, therefore, that toward 18 B.C., the younger, more brilliant, and more "modern" Julia began to obscure Livia in the popular imagination, except in that little group of old conservative nobility which gathered about the wife of Augustus. So true is this that about this time, Augustus, wishing to place himself into conformity with his law *de maritandis ordinibus,* reached a significant decision. Since that law fixed at three the number of children which every citizen should have, if he wished to discharge his whole duty toward the state, and since Augustus had but a single daughter, he decided to adopt Caius and Lucius, the first two sons that Julia had borne to Agrippa. This was a great triumph for her, in so far as her sons would henceforth bear the very popular name of Cæsar.

But the difficulties which the first marriage with Marcellus had occasioned and which

Augustus had hoped to remove by this second marriage soon reappeared in another but still more dangerous form, for they had their roots in that passionate, imperious, bold, and imprudent temperament of Julia. This temperament the Roman education had not succeeded in taming; it was strengthened by the undisciplined spirit of the times. And with it Julia soon began to abuse the fortune, the popularity, the prestige, and the power which came to her from being the daughter of Augustus and the wife of Agrippa. Little by little she became possessed by the mania of being in Rome the antithesis of Livia, of conducting herself in every case in a manner contrary to that followed by her stepmother. If the latter, like Augustus, wore garments of wool woven at home, Julia affected silks purchased at great price from the oriental merchants. These the ladies of the older type considered a ruinous luxury because of the expense, and an indecency because of the prominence which they gave to the figure. Where Livia was sparing, Julia was prodigal. If Livia preferred to go to

the theater surrounded by elderly and dignified men, Julia always showed herself in public with a retinue of brilliant and elegant youths. If Livia set an example of reserve, Julia dared appear in the provinces in public at the side of her husband and receive public homage. In spite of the law which forbade the wives of Roman governors to accompany their husbands into the provinces, Julia prevailed upon Agrippa to make her his companion when in the year 16 B.C. he made his long journey through the East. Everywhere she appeared at his side, at the great receptions, at the courts, in the cities; and she was the first of the Latin women to be apotheosized in the Orient. Paphos called her "divine" and set up statues to her; Mitylene called her the New Aphrodite, Eressus, Aphrodite Genetrix. These were bold innovations in a state in which tradition was still so powerful; but they could scarcely have been of serious danger to Julia, if her passionate temperament had not led her to commit a much more serious imprudence. Agrippa, compared to her, was old, a simple,

From the cameo in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris

THE GREAT PARIS CAMEO

This is the largest ancient cameo known, and is said to have been sent from Constantinople by Baldwin II. to Louis IX. It represents the living members of the imperial family protected by the deified Augustus. In the center Tiberius is shown seated, as Jupiter, with his mother, Livia, at his left, as Ceres. In front of them stand Germanicus and his mother Antonia

unpolished man of obscure origin who was frequently absent on affairs of state. In the circle which had formed about Julia there were a number of handsome, elegant, pleasing young men; among others one Sempronius Gracchus, a descendant of the famous tribunes. Julia seems toward the close to have had for him, even in the lifetime of Agrippa, certain failings which the *Lex de adulteriis* visited with terrible punishments.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if from this time on there should have been fostered between Julia and Livia a half-suppressed rivalry. The fact is, in itself, very probable and several indications of it have remained in tradition and in history. We know also that two parties were already beginning to gather about the two women. One of these might be called the party of the Claudii and of the old conservative nobility, the other the party of the Julii and of that youthful nobility which was following the modern trend. As long as Agrippa lived, Augustus, by holding the balance between the two factions, succeeded in

maintaining a certain equilibrium. With the death of Agrippa, which occurred in 12 B.C., the situation was changed.

Julia was now for the second time a widow, and by the provisions of the *Lex de maritandis ordinibus* should remarry. Augustus in the traditional manner sought a husband for her, and, seeking him only with the idea of furthering a political purpose, he found for her Tiberius, the elder son of Livia. Tiberius was the stepbrother of Julia and was married to a lady whom he tenderly loved; but these were considerations which could hardly give pause to a Roman senator. In the marriage of Tiberius and Julia, Augustus saw a way of snuffing out the incipient discord between the Julii and the Claudii, between Julia and Livia, between the parties of the new and of the old nobility. He therefore ordered Tiberius to repudiate the young, beautiful, and noble Agrippina in order to marry Julia. For Tiberius the sacrifice was hard; we are told that one day after the divorce, having met Agrippina at some house, he began to weep so bitterly that Augustus ordered that

the former husband and wife should never meet again. But Tiberius, on the other hand, had been educated by his mother in the ancient ideas, and therefore knew that a Roman nobleman must sacrifice his feelings to the public interest. As for Julia, she celebrated her third wedding joyfully; for Tiberius, after the deaths of Agrippa and of his own brother Drusus, was the rising man, the hope and the second personage of the empire, so that she was not forced to step down from the lofty position which the marriage with Agrippa had given her. Tiberius, furthermore, was a very handsome man and for this reason also he seems not to have been displeasing to Julia, who in the matter of husbands considered not only glory and power.

The marriage of Julia and Tiberius began under happy auspices. Julia seemed to love Tiberius and Tiberius did what he could to be a good husband. Julia soon felt that she was once more to become a mother and the hope of this other child seemed to cement the union between husband and wife. But the rosy

promises of the beginning were soon disappointed. Tiberius was the son of Livia, a true Claudius, the worthy heir of two ancient lines, an uncompromising traditionalist, therefore a rigid and disdainful aristocrat, and a soldier severe with others as with himself. He wished the aristocracy to set the people an example of all the virtues which had made Rome so great in peace and war: religious piety, simplicity of customs, frugality, family purity, and rigid observance of all the laws. The luxury and prodigality which were becoming more and more wide-spread among the young nobility had no fiercer enemy than he. He held that a man of great lineage who spent his substance on jewels, on dress, and on revels was a traitor to his country, and no one demanded with greater insistence than he that the great laws of the year 18 B.C., the sumptuary law, the laws on marriage and adultery, should be enforced with the severest rigor. Julia, on the other hand, loved extravagance, festivals, joyous companies of elegant youths, an easy, brilliant life full of amusement.

From the statue in the Lateran Museum, Rome

OCTAVIA, THE SISTER OF AUGUSTUS

For greater misfortune, the son who was born of their union died shortly after and discord found its way between Julia and Tiberius. Sempronius Gracchus, who knew how to profit by this, reappeared and again made advances to Julia. She again lent her ear to his bland words and the domestic disagreement rapidly became embittered. Tiberius,—this is certain,—soon learned that Julia had resumed her relations with Sempronius Gracchus, and a new, intolerable torment was added to his already distressed life. According to the *Lex de adulteriis,* he as husband should have made known the crime of his wife to the pretor and have had her punished. He had been one of those who had always most vehemently denounced the nobility for their weakness in the enforcement of this law. Now that his own wife had fallen under the provisions of the terrible statute, to which so many other women had been forced to submit, the moment had come to give the weak that example of unconquerable firmness which he had so often demanded of others. But Julia was the daughter

of Augustus. Could he call down, without the consent of Augustus, so terrible a scandal upon the first house of the empire, render its daughter infamous, and drive her into exile? Augustus, though he desired his daughter to be more prudent and serious, yet loved and protected her; above all, he disliked dangerous scandal, and Julia dared to do whatever she wished, knowing herself invulnerable under his protection and his love.

To this hard and false situation Tiberius, fuming with rage, had to adjust himself. He lived in a separate apartment, keeping up with Julia only the relations necessary to save appearances, but he could not divorce her, much less publish her guilt. The situation grew still worse when political discontent began to use for its own ends the discord between Julia and Tiberius. Tiberius had many enemies among the nobility, especially among the young men of his own age; partly because his rapid, brilliant career had aroused much jealousy, partly because his conservative, traditionalist tendencies toward authority and militarism disturbed

many of them. More and more among the nobility there was increasing the desire for a mild and easy-going government which should allow them to enjoy their privileges without hardship and which should not be too severe in imposing its duties upon them.

On the other hand, Julia was most ambitious. Since, after the disagreements with Tiberius had broken out, she could no longer hope to be the powerful wife of the first person of the empire after Augustus, she sought compensation. Thus there formed about Julia a party which sought in every way to ruin the lofty position which Tiberius occupied in the state, by setting up against him Caius Cæsar, the son of Julia by Agrippa, whom Augustus had adopted and of whom he was very fond. In 6 B.C., Caius Cæsar was only fourteen years old, but at that period an agitation was set on foot whereby, through a special privilege conceded to him by the senate, he was to be named consul for the year of Rome 754, when Caius should have reached twenty. This was a manœuver of the Julian party to attract popu-

lar attention to the youth, to prepare a rival for Tiberius in his quality as principal collaborator of Augustus, and to gain a hold upon the future head of the state.

The move was altogether very bold; for this nomination of a child consul contradicted all the fundamental principles of the Roman constitution, and it would probably have been fatal to the party which evolved it, had not the indignant rage of Tiberius assured its triumph. Tiberius opposed this law, which he took as an offense, and he wished Augustus to oppose it, and at the outset Augustus did so. But then, either because Julia was able to bend him to her desires or because in the senate there was in truth a strong party which supported it out of hatred for Tiberius, Augustus at last yielded, seeking to placate Tiberius with other compensations. But Tiberius was too proud and violent an aristocrat to accept compensations and indignantly demanded permission to retire to Rhodes, abandoning all the public offices which he exercised. He certainly hoped to make his loss felt, for indeed Rome needed

From the painting by L. Alma Tadema

A RECEPTION AT LIVIA'S VILLA

The scene evidently is at Livia's country palace at Prima Porta. Agrippa is seen descending the steps to be received by Augustus and Livia (who are not shown in the picture). The original of the statue of Augustus, here shown, was found in the ruins of Livia's villa close to the flight of marble steps and its base. The remains of the steps and the base of the statue are standing to-day at Prima Porta

him. But he was mistaken. This act of Tiberius was severely judged by public opinion as a reprisal upon the public for a private offense. Augustus became angry with him and in his absence all his enemies took courage and hurled themselves against him. The honors to Caius Cæsar were approved amid general enthusiasm and the Julian party triumphed all along the line; it reached the height of power and popularity, while Tiberius was constrained to content himself with the idle life of a private person at Rhodes.

But at Rome Livia still remained. From that moment began the mortal duel between Livia and Julia.

III

THE DAUGHTERS OF AGRIPPA

TIBERIUS had now broken with Augustus, he had lost the support of public opinion, he was hated by the majority of the senate. At Rhodes he soon found himself, therefore, in the awkward position of one who through a false move has played into the hands of his enemies and sees no way of recovering his position. It had been easy to leave Rome; to reënter it was difficult, and in all probability his fortune would have been forever compromised, and he would never have become emperor, had it not been for the fact that in the midst of this general defection two women remained faithful. They were his mother, Livia, and his sister-in-law, Antonia, the widow of that brother Drusus who, dying in his youth, had carried to his grave the hopes of Rome.

Antonia was the daughter of the emperor's

sister Octavia and of Mark Antony, the famous triumvir whose name remains forever linked in story with that of Cleopatra. This daughter of Antony was certainly the noblest and the gentlest of all the women who appear in the lugubrious and tragic history of the family of the Cæsars. Serious, modest, and even-tempered, she was likewise endowed with beauty and virtue, and she brought into the family and into its struggles a spirit of concord, serenity of mind, and sweet reasonableness, though they could not always prevail against the violent passions and clashing interests of those about her. As long as Drusus lived, Drusus and Antonia had been for the Romans the model of the devoted pair of lovers, and their tender affection had become proverbial; yet the Roman multitude, always given to admiring the descendants of the great families, was even more deeply impressed by the beauty, the virtue, the sweetness, the modesty, and the reserve of Antonia. After the death of Drusus, she did not wish to marry again, even though the *Lex de maritandis ordinibus* made it a duty.

"Young and beautiful," wrote Valerius Maximus, "she withdrew to a life of retirement in the company of Livia, and the same bed which had seen the death of the youthful husband saw his faithful spouse grow old in an austere widowhood." Augustus and the people were so touched by this supreme proof of fidelity to the memory of the ever-cherished husband that by the common consent of public opinion she was relieved of the necessity of remarrying; and Augustus himself, who had always carefully watched over the observance of the marital law in his own family, did not dare insist. Whether living at her villa of Bauli, where she spent the larger part of her year, or at Rome, the beautiful widow gave her attention to the bringing up of her three children, Germanicus, Livilla, and Claudius. Ever since the death of Octavia, she had worshiped Livia as a mother and lived in the closest intimacy with her, and, withdrawn from public life, she attempted now to bring a spirit of peace into the torn and tragic family.

Antonia was very friendly with Tiberius,

who, on his side, felt the deepest sympathy and respect for his beautiful and virtuous sister-in-law. It cannot be doubted, therefore, that in this crisis Antonia, who was bound to Livia by many ties, must have taken sides for Livia's son Tiberius. But Antonia was too gentle and mild to lead a faction in the struggle which during these years began between the friends and the enemies of Tiberius, and that rôle was assumed by Livia, who possessed more strength and more authority.

The situation grew worse and worse. Public opinion steadily became more hostile to Tiberius and more favorable to Julia and her elder son, and it was not long before they wished to give to her younger son, Lucius, the same honors which had already been bestowed upon his brother Caius. Private interest soon allied itself with the hatred and rancor against Tiberius; and scarcely had he departed when the senate increased the appropriation for public supplies and public games. All those who profited by these appropriations were naturally interested in preventing the return of

Tiberius, who was notorious for his opposition to all useless expenditures. Any measure, however dishonest, was therefore considered proper, provided only it helped to ruin Tiberius; and his enemies had recourse to every art and calumny, among other things actually accusing him of conspiracies against Augustus. Even for a woman as able and energetic as Livia it was an arduous task to struggle against the inclinations of Augustus, against public opinion, against the majority of the senate, against private interest, and against Julia and her friends. Indeed, four years passed during which the situation of Tiberius and his party grew steadily worse, while the party of Julia increased in power.

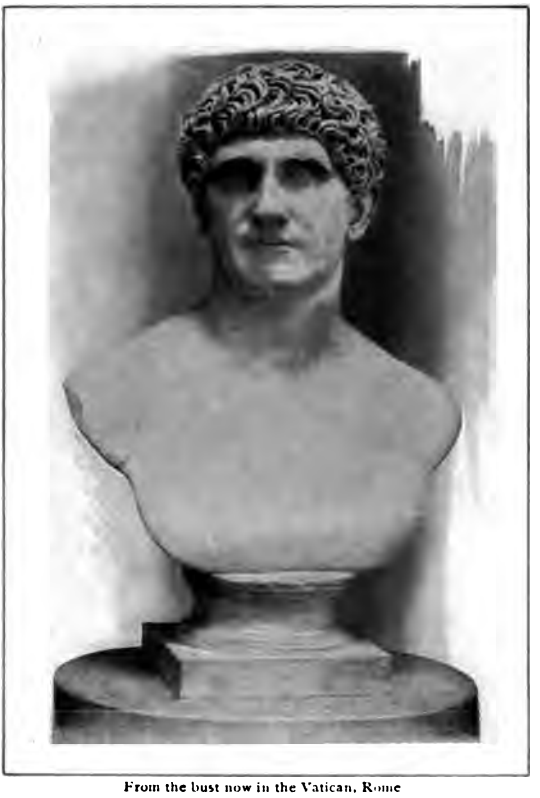
Finally the party of Tiberius resolved to attempt a startlingly bold move. They decided to cripple the opposition by means of a terrible scandal in the very person of Julia. The *Lex Julia de adulteriis,* framed by Augustus in the year 18, authorized any citizen to denounce an unfaithful wife before the judges, if the husband and father should both refuse to make

the accusation. This law, which was binding upon all Roman citizens, was therefore applicable even to the daughter of Augustus, the widow of Agrippa, the mother of Caius and Lucius Cæsar, those two youths in whom were centered the hopes of the republic. She had violated the *Lex Julia* and she had escaped the penalties which had been visited on many other ladies of the aristocracy only because no one had dared to call down this scandal upon the first family of the empire. The party of Tiberius, protected and guided by Livia, at last hazarded this step.

It is impossible to say what part Livia played in this terrible tragedy. It is certain that either she or some other influential personage succeeded in gaining possession of the proofs of Julia's guilt and brought them to Augustus, threatening to lay them before the pretor and to institute proceedings if he did not discharge his duty. Augustus found himself constrained to apply to himself his own terrible law. He himself had decreed that if the husband, as was then the case of Tiberius, could not accuse

a faithless woman, the father must do so. It was his law, and he had to bow to it in order to avoid scandals and worse consequences. He exiled Julia to the little island of Pandataria, and at the age of thirty-seven the brilliant, pleasing, and voluptuous young woman who had dazzled Rome for many years was compelled to disappear from the metropolis forever and retire to an existence on a barren island. She was cut off by the implacable hatred of a hostile party and by the inexorable cruelty of a law framed by her own father!

The exile of Julia marks the moment when the fortunes of Tiberius and Livia, which had been steadily losing ground for four years, began to revive, though not so rapidly as Livia and Tiberius had probably expected. Julia preserved, even in her misfortune, many faithful friends and a great popularity. For a long time popular demonstrations were held in her favor at Rome, and many busied themselves tenaciously to obtain her pardon from Augustus, all of which goes to prove that the horrible infamies which were spread about her were



From the bust now in the Vatican, Rome

MARK ANTONY

the inventions of enemies. Julia had broken the *Lex Julia*,—so much is certain,—but even if she had been guilty of an unfortunate act, she was not a monster, as her enemies wished to have it believed. She was a beautiful woman, as there had been before, as there are now, and as there will be hereafter, touched with human vices and with human virtues.

As a matter of fact, her party, after it had recovered from the terrible shock of the scandal, quickly reorganized. Firm in its intention of having Julia pardoned, it took up the struggle again, and tried as far as it could to hinder Tiberius from returning to Rome and again taking part in political life, knowing well that if the husband once set foot in Rome, all hope of Julia's return would be lost. Only one of them could reënter Rome. It was either Tiberius or Julia; and more furiously than ever the struggle between the two parties was waged about Augustus.

Caius and Lucius Cæsar, Julia's two youthful sons, of whom Augustus was very fond, were the principal instruments with which the

enemies of Tiberius fought against the influence of Livia over Augustus. Every effort was made to sow hatred and distrust between the two youths and Tiberius, to the end that it might become impossible to have them collaborate with him in the government of the empire, and that the presence of Julia's sons should of necessity exclude that of her husband. A further ally was soon found in the person of another child of Julia and Agrippa, the daughter who has come down into history under the name of the Younger Julia. Augustus had conceived as great a love for her as for the two sons, and there was no doubt that she would aid with every means in her power the party averse to Tiberius; for her mother's instincts of liberty, luxury, and pleasure were also inherent in her. Married to L. Æmilius Paulus, the son of one of the greatest Roman families, she had early assumed in Rome a position which made her, like her mother, the antithesis of Livia. She, too, gathered about her, as the elder Julia had done, a court of elegant youths, men of letters, and poets,—

Ovid was of the number,—and with this group she hoped to be able to hold the balance of power in the government against that coterie of aged senators who paid court to Livia. She, too, took advantage of the good-will of her grandfather, just as her mother had done, and in the shadow of his protection she displayed an extravagance which the laws did not permit, but which, on this account, was all the more admired by the enemies of the old Roman puritanism. As though openly to defy the sumptuary law of Augustus, she built herself a magnificent villa; and, if we dare believe tradition, it was not long before she, too, had violated the very law which had proved disastrous to her mother.

Thus, even after the departure of Julia, her three children, Caius, Lucius, and Julia the Younger, constituted in Rome an alliance which was sufficiently powerful to contest every inch of ground with the party of Livia; for they had public opinion in their favor, they enjoyed the support of the senate, and they played upon the weakness of Augustus. In the

year 2 A.D., after four years of exhaustive efforts spent in struggle and intrigue, all that Livia had been able to obtain was the mere permission that Tiberius might return to Rome, under the conditions, however, that he retire to private life, that he give himself up to the education of his son, and that he in no wise mingle in public affairs. The condition of the empire was growing worse on every side; the finances were disordered, the army was disorganized, and the frontiers were threatened, for revolt was raising its head in Gaul, in Pannonia, and especially in Germany. Every day the situation seemed to demand the hand of Tiberius, who, now in the prime of life, was recognized as one of the leading administrators and the first general of the empire. But, for all Livia's insistence, Augustus refused to call Tiberius back into the government. The Julii were masters of the state, and held the Claudii at a distance.

Perhaps Tiberius would never have returned to power in Rome had not chance aided him in the sudden taking off, in a strange and unfore-

From a photograph by the Berlin Photographic Co. of the painting by L. Alma Tadema

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

seen manner, of Caius and Lucius Cæsar. The latter died at Marseilles, following a brief illness, shortly after the return of Tiberius to Rome, August 29, in the year 2 A.D. It was a great grief to Augustus, and, twenty months after, was followed by another still more serious. In February of the year 4, Caius also died, in Lycia, of a wound received in a skirmish. These two deaths were so premature, so close to each other, and so opportune for Tiberius, that posterity has refused to see in them simply one of the many mischances of life. Later generations have tried to believe that Livia had a hand in these fatalities. Yet he who understands life at all knows that it is easier to imagine and suspect romantic poisonings of this sort than it is to carry them out. Even leaving the character of Livia out of consideration, it is difficult to imagine how she would have dared, or have been able, to poison the two youths at so great a distance from Rome, one in Asia, the other in Gaul, by means of a long train of accomplices, and this at a moment when the family of Augustus was

divided by many hatreds and every member was suspected, spied upon, and watched by a hostile party. Furthermore, it would have been necessary to carry this out at a time when the example of Julia proved to all that relationship to Augustus was not a sufficient defense against the rigors of the law and the severity of public opinion when roused by any serious crime. Besides, it is a recognized fact that people are always inclined to suspect a crime whenever a man prominent in the public eye dies before his time. At Turin, for example, there still lives a tradition among the people that Cavour was poisoned, some say by the order of Napoleon III, others by the Jesuits, simply because his life was suddenly cut off, at the age of fifty-two, at the moment when Italy had greatest need of him. Indeed, even to-day we are impressed when we see in the family of Augustus so many premature deaths of young men; but precisely because these untimely deaths are frequent we come to see in them the predestined ruin of a worn-out race in history. All ancient families at a certain moment ex-

haust themselves. This is the reason why no aristocracy has been able to endure for long unless continually renewed, and why all those that have refused to take in new blood have failed from the face of the earth. There is no serious reason for attributing so horrible a crime to a woman who was venerated by the best men of her time; and the fables which the populace, always faithful to Julia, and therefore hostile to Livia, recounted on this score, and which the historians of the succeeding age collected, have no decisive value.

The deaths of Caius and Lucius Cæsar were therefore a great good fortune for Tiberius, because it determined his return to power. The situation of the empire was growing worse on every hand; Germany was in the midst of revolt, and it was necessary to turn the army over to vigorous hands. Augustus, old and irresolute, still hesitated, fearing the dislike which was brewing both in the senate and among the people against the too dictatorial Tiberius. At last, however, he was forced to yield.

The more serious, more authoritative, more

ancient party of the senatorial nobility, in accord with Livia and headed by a nephew of Pompey, Cnæus Cornelius Cinna, forced him to recall Tiberius, threatening otherwise to have recourse to some violent measures the exact character of which we do not know. The unpopularity of Tiberius was a source of continual misgivings to the aging Augustus, and it was only through this threat of a yet greater danger that they finally overcame his hesitation. On June 26, in the fourth year of our era, Augustus adopted Tiberius as his son, and had conferred upon him for ten years the office of tribune, thus making him his colleague. Tiberius returned to power, and, in accordance with the wishes of Augustus, adopted as his son Germanicus, the elder son of Drusus and Antonia, his faithful friend. He was an intelligent, active lad of whom all entertained the highest hopes.

On his return to power, Tiberius, together with Augustus, took measures for reorganizing the army and the state, and sought to bring about by means of new marriages and acts of

From the statue formerly in the Farnese collection, now in the Museo Nazionale, Naples

TIBERIUS, ELDER SON OF LIVIA AND STEPSON OF AUGUSTUS

Augustus, lacking a male heir, first adopted his younger stepson Drusus, who died 9 B. C. owing to a fall from his horse. In 4 A. D. he adopted Tiberius, and was succeeded by him as Emperor in 14 A. D.

clemency a closer union between the Julian and Claudian branches of the family, then bitterly divided by the violent struggles of recent years. The terms of Julia's exile were made easier; Germanicus married Agrippina, another daughter of Julia and Agrippa, and a sister of Julia the Younger; the widow of Caius Cæsar, Livilla, sister of Germanicus and daughter of Antonia, was given to Drusus, the son of Tiberius, a young man born in the same year as Germanicus. Drusus, despite certain defects, such as irascibility and a marked fondness for pleasure, gave evidence that he possessed the requisite qualities of a statesman —firmness, sound judgment, and energy. The policy which dictated these marriages was always the same—to make of the family of Augustus one formidable and united body, so that it might constitute the solid base of the entire government of the empire. But, alas! wise as were the intentions, the ferments of discord and the unhappiness of the times prevailed against them. Too much had been hoped for in recalling Tiberius to power. During the ten

years of senile government, the empire had been reduced to a state of utter disorder. The measures planned by Tiberius for reëstablishing the finances of the state roused the liveliest discontent among the wealthy classes in Italy, and again excited their hatred against him. In the year 6 A.D., the great revolt of Pannonia broke out and for a moment filled Italy with unspeakable terror. In an instant of mob fury, they even came to fear that the peninsula would be invaded and Rome besieged by the barbarians of the Danube. Tiberius came to the rescue, and with patience and coolness put down the insurrection, not by facing it in open conflict, but by drawing out the war to such a length as to weary the enemy, a method both safe and wise, considering the unreliable character of the troops at his command. But at Rome, once the fear had subsided, the long duration of the war became a new cause for dissatisfaction and anger, and offered to many a pretext for venting their long-cherished hatred against Tiberius, who was accused of being afraid, of not knowing how to end the

war, and of drawing it out for motives of personal ambition. The party averse to Tiberius again raised its head and resorted once more to its former policy—that of urging on Germanicus against Tiberius. The former was young, ambitious, bold, and would have preferred daring strokes and a war quickly concluded. It is certain that there would have risen then and there a Germanican and a Tiberian party, if Augustus, on this occasion, had not energetically sustained Tiberius from Rome. But the situation again became strained and full of uncertainty.

In the midst of these conflicts and these fears, a new scandal broke out in the family of Augustus. The Younger Julia, like her mother, allowed herself to be caught in violation of the *Lex Julia de adulteriis,* and she also was compelled to take the road of exile. In what manner and at whose instance the scandal was disclosed we do not know; we do know, however, that Augustus was very fond of his granddaughter, whence we can assume that in this moment of turbid agitation, when so much

hatred was directed against his family and his house, and when so many forces were uniting to overthrow Tiberius again, notwithstanding the fact that he had saved the empire, Augustus felt that he must a second time submit to his own law. He did not dare contend with the puritanical party, with the more conservative minority in the senate,—the friends of Tiberius,—over this second victim in his family. Without a doubt everything possible was done to hush up the scandal, and there would scarcely have come down to us even a summary notice of the exile of the second Julia had it not been that among those exiled with her was the poet Ovid, who was to fill twenty centuries with his laments and to bring them to the ears of the latest generations.

Ovid's exile is one of those mysteries of history which has most keenly excited the curiosity of the ages. Ovid himself, without knowing it, has rendered it more acute by his prudence in not speaking more clearly of the cause of his exile, making only rare allusions to it, which may be summed up in his famous words, *car-*

men et error. It is for this reason that posterity has for twenty centuries been asking itself what was this error which sent the exquisite poet away to die among the barbarous Getæ on the frozen banks of the Danube; and naturally they have never compassed his secret. But if, therefore, it is impossible to say exactly what the error was which cost Ovid so dearly, it is possible, on the other hand, to explain that unique and famous episode in the history of Rome to which, after all, Ovid owes a great part of his immortality. He was not the victim, as has been too often repeated, of a caprice of despotism; and therefore he cannot be compared with any of the many Russian writers whom the administration, through fear and hatred, deports to Siberia without definite reason. Certainly the error of Ovid lay in his having violated some clause of the *Lex Julia de adulteriis,* which, as we know, was so comprehensive in its provisions that it considered as accessories to the crime those guilty of various acts and deeds which, judged even with modern rigor and severity, would seem reprehen-

sible, to be sure, but not deserving of such terrible punishment. Ovid was certainly involved under one of these clauses,—which one we do not, and never shall, know,—but his error, whether serious or light, was not the true cause of his condemnation. It was the pretext used by the more conservative and puritanical part of Roman society to vent upon him a long-standing grudge the true motives of which lay much deeper.

What was the standing of this poet of the gay, frivolous, exquisite ladies whom they wished to send into exile? He was the author of that graceful, erotic poetry who, through the themes which he chose for his elegant verses, had encouraged the tendencies toward luxury, diversion, and the pleasures which had transformed the austere matron of a former day into an extravagant and undisciplined creature given to voluptuousness; the poet who had gained the admiration of women especially by flattering their most dangerous and perverse tendencies. The puritanical party hated and combatted this trend of the newer genera-

tions, and therefore, also, the poetry of Ovid on account of its disastrous effects upon the women, whom it weaned from the virtues most prized in former days—frugality, simplicity, family affection, and purity of life. The Roman aristocracy did not recognize the right of absolute literary freedom which is acknowledged by many modern states, in which writers and men of letters have acquired a strong political influence. The theory, held by many countries to-day that any publication is justifiable, provided it be a work of art, was not accepted by the Romans in power. On the contrary, they were convinced that an idea or a sentiment, dangerous in itself, became still more harmful when artistically expressed. Therefore Rome had always known the existence of a kind of police supervision of ideas and of literary forms, exercised through various means by the ruling aristocracy, and especially in reference to women, who constituted that element of social life in which virtue and purity of customs are of the greatest consequence. The Roman ladies of the aristoc-

racy, as we have seen, received considerable instruction. They read the poets and philosophers, and precisely for this reason there was always at Rome a strong aversion to light and immoral literature. If books had circulated among men only, the poetry of Ovid would perhaps not have enjoyed the good fortune of a persecution which was to focus upon it the attention of posterity. The greater liberty conceded to women thus placed upon society an even greater reserve in the case of its literature. This Ovid learned to his cost when he was driven into exile because his books gave too much delight to too many ladies at Rome. By the order of Augustus these books were removed from the libraries, which did not hinder their coming down to us entire, while many a more serious work—like Livy's history, for example—has been either entirely or in large part lost.

After the fall of the second Julia up to the time of his death, which occurred August 23, in the year 14 A.D., Augustus had no further

From the statue formerly in Pompeii, now in the Museo Nazionale, Naples

DRUSUS, THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF TIBERIUS

serious griefs over the ladies of his family. The great misfortune of the last years of his government was a public misfortune—the defeat of Varus and the loss of Germany. But with what sadness must he have looked back in the last weeks of his long life upon the history of his family! All those whom he had loved were torn from him before their time by a cruel destiny: Drusus, Caius, and Lucius Cæsar by death; the Julias by the cruelty of the law and by an infamy worse than death. The unique grandeur to which he had attained had not brought fortune to his family. He was old, almost alone, a weary survivor among the tombs of those dear to him who had been untimely lost through fate, and with the still sadder memories of those who had been buried in a living grave of infamy. His only associates were Tiberius, with whom he had become reconciled; Antonia, his sweet and highly respected daughter-in-law; and Livia, the woman whom destiny had placed at his side in one of the most critical moments of his life, the faithful companion through fifty-two

years of his varied and wonderful fortune. We can therefore understand why it was that, as the historians tell us, the last words of the old emperor should have been a tender expression of gratitude to his faithful wife. "Farewell, farewell, Livia! Remember our long union!" With these words, rendering homage to the wife whom custom and the law had made the faithful and loving companion, and not the docile slave, of her husband, he ended his life like a true Roman.

If the family of Augustus had undergone grievous vicissitudes during his life, its situation became even more dangerous after his death. The historian who sets out with the preconceived notion that Augustus founded a monarchy, and imagines that his family was destined to enjoy the privileges which in all monarchies are accorded the sovereign's house, will never arrive at a complete understanding of the story of the first empire. His family did, to be sure, always enjoy a privileged status, if not at law, at least in fact, and through the very force of circumstances; but it was not for

naught that Rome had been for many centuries an aristocratic republic in which all the families of the nobility had considered themselves equal, and had been subject to the same laws. The aristocracy avenged itself upon the imperial family for the privileges which the lofty dignity of its head assured it by giving it hatred instead of respect. They suspected and calumniated all of its members, and with a malicious joy subjected them, whenever possible, to the common laws and even maltreated with particular ferocity those who by chance fell under the provisions of any statute. As a compensation for the privileges which the royal family enjoyed, they had to assume the risk of receiving the harshest penalties of the laws. If any of them, therefore, fell under the rigor of these laws, the senatorial aristocracy especially was ever eager to enjoy the atrocious satisfaction of seeing one of the favored tortured as much as or more than the ordinary man. There is no doubt, for example, that the two Julias were more severely punished and disgraced than other ladies of the aristocracy guilty of the

same crime. And Augustus was forced to waive his affection for them in order that it might not be said, particularly in the senate, that his relatives enjoyed special favors and that Augustus made laws only for others.

Yet as long as Augustus lived, he was a sufficient protection for his relatives. He was, especially in the last twenty years of his life, the object of an almost religious veneration. The great and stormy epoch out of which he had risen, the extraordinary fortune which had assisted him, his long reign, the services both real and imaginary which he had rendered the empire—all had conferred upon him such an authority that envy laid aside its most poisonous darts before him. Out of respect for him even his family was not particularly calumniated or maltreated, save now and then in moments of great irritation, as when the two Julias were condemned. But after his death the situation grew considerably worse; for Tiberius, although he was a man of great capacity and merit, a sagacious administrator and a valiant general, did not enjoy the sympathy

STATUE OF A YOUNG ROMAN WOMAN

and respect which had been accorded to Augustus. Rather was he hated by those who had for a long time sided with Caius and Lucius Cæsar and who formed a considerable portion of the senate and the aristocracy. It was not the spontaneous admiration of the senate and of the people, but the exigencies of the situation, which had made him master of the government when Augustus died. The empire was at war with the Germans, and the Pannoniço-Illyrian provinces were in revolt, and it was necessary to place at the head of the empire a man who should strike terror to the hearts of the barbarians and who on occasion should be able to combat them. Tiberius, furthermore, was so well aware that the majority of the senate and the Roman people would submit to his government only through force, that he had for a long time been in doubt whether to accept the empire or not, so completely did he understand that with so many enemies it would be difficult to rule.

Under the government of Tiberius the imperial family was surrounded by a much more

Julia, Tiberius had not married again, and the offices of tenderness which a wife should have given him were discharged in part by his mother, but largely by his sister-in-law. No one exercised so much influence as Antonia over the diffident and self-centered spirit of the emperor. Whoever wished to obtain a favor from him could do no better than to intrust his cause to Antonia. There is no doubt, therefore, that Antonia checked her son, and in his society counterbalanced the influence of his wife.

But even if two parties were not formed, it was not long before other difficulties arose. Discord soon made itself felt between Livia and Agrippina. More serious still was the fact that Germanicus, who, after the death of Augustus, had been sent as a legate to Gaul, initiated a German policy contrary to the instructions given him by Tiberius. This was due partly to his own impetuous temperament and partly to the goadings of his wife and the flatterers who surrounded him. Tiberius, whom the Germans knew from long experience, no longer wished to molest them. The

From a photograph by Brogi of the bust in the Museo Nazionale, Naples

A ROMAN GIRL OF THE TIME OF THE CÆSARS

revolt of Arminius proved that when their independence was threatened by Rome they were capable of uniting and becoming dangerous; when left to themselves they destroyed one another by continual wars. It was advisable, therefore, according to Tiberius, not to attack or molest them, but at the proper moment to fan the flames of their continual dissensions and wars in order that, while destroying themselves, they should leave the empire in peace. This wise and prudent policy might please a seasoned soldier like Tiberius, who had already won his laurels in many wars and who had risen to the pinnacle of glory and power. It did not please the pushing and eager youth Germanicus, who was anxious to distinguish himself by great and brilliant exploits, and who had at his side, as a continual stimulus, an ambitious and passionate wife, surrounded by a court of flatterers. Germanicus, on his own initiative, crossed the Rhine and took up the offensive again all along the line, attacking the most powerful of the German tribes one after the other in important and successful expedi-

tions. At Rome this bold move was naturally looked upon with pleasure, especially by the numerous enemies of Tiberius, either because boldness in politics rather than prudence always pleases those who have nothing to lose, or because it was felt that the glory which accrued to Germanicus might offend the emperor. And Tiberius, though he did disapprove, allowed his adopted son to continue for a time, doubtless in order that he might not have to shock public opinion and that it might not seem that he wished to deprive the youthful Germanicus of the glory which he was gaining for himself.

He was nevertheless resolved not to allow Germanicus to involve Rome too deeply in German affairs, and when it seemed to him that the youth had fittingly proved his prowess and had made the enemies of Rome feel its power sufficiently, he recalled him and in his stead sent Drusus, who was his real, and not his adopted, son. But this recall did not at all please the party of Germanicus, who were loud and bitter in their recriminations. They began

to murmur that Tiberius was jealous of Germanicus and his popularity; that he had recalled him in order to prevent his winning glory by an immortal achievement. Tiberius so little thought of keeping Germanicus from using his brilliant qualities in the service of Rome that shortly after, in the year 18 A.D., he sent him into the Orient to introduce order into Armenia, which was shaken by internal dissensions, and he gave him a command there not less important than the one of which he had deprived him. At the same time he was unwilling to intrust things entirely to the judgment of Germanicus, in whom he recognized a young man of capacity and valor, but, nevertheless, a young man influenced by an imprudent wife and incited by an irresponsible court of flatterers. For this reason he placed at his side an older and more experienced man in whom he had the fullest confidence—Cnæus Piso, a senator who belonged to one of the most illustrious families in Rome.

It was the duty of Cnæus Piso to counsel, to restrain, and to aid the young Germanicus, and

motives of hatred and jealousy, of forever laying new obstacles in the way of his adopted son. Livia, too, now no longer protected by Augustus, became a target for the accusations of a malevolent public opinion. It was said that she persecuted Germanicus out of hatred for Agrippina. Tiberius was much embarrassed, being hampered by public opinion favorable to Germanicus and at the same time desiring that his sons should set an example of obedience to the laws.

A sudden catastrophe still further complicated the situation. In 19 A.D. Germanicus was taken ill at Antioch. The malady was long and marked by periods of convalescence and relapses, but finally, like his father and like his brothers-in-law, Germanicus, too, succumbed to his destiny in the fullness of youth. At thirty-four, when life with her most winning smiles seemed to be stretching out her arms to him, he died. This one more untimely death brought to an abrupt end a most dangerous political struggle. Is it to be wondered at, then, that the people, whose imagination had been

aroused, should have begun to murmur about poison? The party of Germanicus was driven to desperation by this death, which virtually ended its existence, and destroyed at a single stroke all the hopes of those who had seen in Germanicus the instrument of their future fortune. They therefore eagerly collected, embellished, and spread these rumors. Had Agrippina been a woman of any judgment or reflection, she would have been the first to see the absurdity of this foolish gossip; but as a matter of fact no one placed more implicit faith in such reports than she, now that affliction had rendered her even more impetuous and violent.

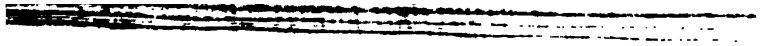
It was not long before every one at Rome had heard it said that Germanicus had been poisoned by Piso, acting, so it was intimated in whispers, at the bidding of Tiberius and Livia. Piso had been the tool of Tiberius; Plancina, the tool of Livia. The accusation is absurd; it is even recognized as such by Tacitus, who was actuated by a fierce hatred against Tiberius. We know from him how the accusers of Piso

recounted that the poison had been drunk in a health at a banquet to which Piso had been invited by Germanicus and at which he was seated several places from his host; he was supposed to have poured the poison into his dishes in the presence of all the guests without any one having seen him! Tacitus himself says that every one thought this an absurd fable, and such every man of good sense will think it to-day. But hatred makes even intelligent persons believe fables even more absurd; the people favorable to Germanicus were embittered against Piso and would not listen to reason. All the enemies of Tiberius easily persuaded themselves that some atrocious mystery was hidden in this death and that, if they instituted proceedings against Piso, they might bring to light a scandal which would compromise the emperor himself. They even began to repeat that Piso possessed letters from Tiberius which contained the order to poison Germanicus.

At last Agrippina arrived at Rome with the ashes of her husband, and she began with her

COSTUMES OF ROMAN MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN IN THE PROCESSION OF A PEACE FESTIVAL

These reliefs formed part of the outer frieze of the right wall of the Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace), erected by Augustus and dedicated 9 B. C. This and another well-preserved section are in the Uffizi Palace, Florence. One of two other fragments in the Villa Medici contains the head and bust of Augustus, and with the section here shown completes what is supposed to be a group of the family of Augustus



usual vehemence to fill the imperial house, the senate, and all Rome with protests, imprecations, and accusations against Piso. The populace, which admired her for her fidelity and love for her husband, was even more deeply stirred, and on every hand the cry was raised that an exemplary punishment ought to be meted out to so execrable a crime.

If at first Piso had treated these absurd charges with haughty disdain, he soon perceived that the danger was growing serious and that it was necessary for him to hasten his return to Rome, where a trial was now inevitable. One of Germanicus's friends had accused him; Agrippina, an unwitting tool in the hands of the emperor's enemies, every day stirred public opinion to still higher pitches of excitement through her grief and her laments; the party of Germanicus worked upon the senate and the people, and when Piso arrived at Rome he found that he had been abandoned by all. His hope lay in Tiberius, who knew the truth and who certainly desired that these wild notions be driven out of the popular mind. But Tibe-

rius was watched with the most painstaking malevolence. Any least action in favor of Piso would have been interpreted as a decisive proof that he had been the murderer's accomplice and therefore wished to save him. In fact, it was being reported at Rome with ever-increasing insistence that at the trial Piso would show the letters of Tiberius. When the trial began, Livia, in the background, cleverly directed her thoughts to the saving of Plancina; but Tiberius could do no more for Piso than to recommend to the senate that they exercise the most rigorous impartiality. His noble speech on this occasion has been preserved for us by Tacitus. "Let them judge," he said, "without regard either for the imperial family or for the family of Piso." The admonition was useless, for his condemnation was a foregone conclusion, despite the absurdity of the charges. The enemies of Tiberius wished to force matters to the uttermost limit in the hope that the famous letters would have to be produced; and they acted with such frenzied hatred and excited

public opinion to such a pitch that Piso killed himself before the end of the trial.

The violence of Agrippina had sent an innocent victim to follow the shade of her young husband. Despite bitter opposition, the emperor, through personal intervention, succeeded in saving the wife, the son, and the fortune of Piso, whose enemies had wished to exterminate his house root and branch. Tiberius thus offered a further proof that he was one of the few persons at Rome who were capable in that trying and troubled time of passing judgment and of reasoning with calm.

IV

TIBERIUS AND AGRIPPINA

THE blackest and most tragic period in the life of Tiberius begins with the death of Germanicus and the terrible scandal of the suit against Piso. It was to pass into history as the worst period of the "Tiberian tyranny"; for it was at this time that the famous *Lex de majestate*[1] (on high treason), which had not been applied under Augustus, came to be frequently invoked, and through its operation atrocious accusations, scandalous trials, and frightful condemnations were multiplied in Rome, to

[1]There was in the Roman legal system no public prosecutor and virtually no police. Every Roman citizen was supposed to watch over the laws and see that they were not infringed. On his retirement from office, any governor or magistrate ran the risk of being impeached by some young aspirant to political honors, and not infrequently oratory, an art much cultivated by the Romans, triumphed over righteousness. In the earlier period the ground on which charges were usually brought was malversation; in the time of the empire they were also frequently brought under the above-mentioned law *de majestate*. It has been said that this common

From a photograph by Anderson of the bust in the Museo Nazionale

TIBERIUS

the terror of all. Many committed suicide in despair, and illustrious families were given over to ruin and infamy.

Posterity still holds Tiberius to account for these tragedies; his cruel and suspicious tyranny is made responsible for these accusations, for the suits which followed, and for the cruel condemnations in which they ended. It is said that every free mind which still remembered ancient Roman liberty gave him umbrage and caused him distress, and that he could suffer to have about him only slaves and hired assassins. But how far this is from the truth! How poorly the superficial judgment of posterity has understood the terrible tragedy of the reign of Tiberius! We always forget

act of accusation, the birthright of the Roman citizen, the greatly esteemed palladium of Roman freedom, became the most convenient instrument of despotism. Since he who could bring a criminal to justice received a fourth of his possessions and estates, and since it brought the accuser into prominence, delation was recklessly indulged in by the unscrupulous, both for the sake of gain and as a means of venting personal spite. The vice lay at the very heart of the Roman system, and was not the invention of Tiberius. He could hardly have done away with it without overthrowing the whole Roman procedure.

that Tiberius was the next Roman emperor after Augustus; the first, that is, who had to bear the weight of the immense charge created by its founder, but without the immense prestige and respect which Augustus had derived from the extraordinary good fortune of his life, from the critical moment in which he had taken over the government, from the general opinion that he had ended the civil wars, brought peace back to an empire in travail, and saved Rome from the imminent ruin with which Egypt and Cleopatra had threatened it. For these reasons, while Augustus lived, the envy, jealousy, rivalry, and hatred of the new authority were held in check in his presence; but they were ever smoldering in the Roman aristocracy, which considered itself robbed of a part of its privileges, and always felt itself humiliated by this same authority, even when it was necessary to submit to it in cases of supreme political necessity. But all this envy, all these jealousies, all these rivalries,—I have said it before, but it is well to repeat it, since the point is of capital importance for the un-

derstanding of the whole history of the first empire,—were unleashed when Tiberius was exalted to the imperial dignity.

What in reality was the situation of Tiberius after the death of Germanicus? We must grasp it well if we wish to understand not only the cruelty of the accusations brought under the law of high treason, but also the whole family policy followed by the second emperor. It was he who had to bear the burden of the whole state, of the finances, of the supplies, of the army, of the home and foreign policies; his was the will that propelled, and the mind that regulated, all. To him every portion of the empire and every social class had recourse, and it was to him that they looked for redress for every wrong or inconvenience or danger. It was to him that the legions looked for their regular stipend, the common people of Rome for abundant grain, the senate for the preservation of boundaries and of the internal order; the provinces looked to him for justice, and the sovereign allies or vassals for the solution of all internal difficulties in which they became

involved. These responsibilities were so numerous and so great that Tiberius, like Augustus, attempted to induce the senate to aid him by assuming its share, according to the ancient constitution; but it was in vain, for the senate sought to shield itself, and always left to him the heavier portion.

Is it conceivable that a man could have discharged so many responsibilities in times when the traditions of the government were only beginning to take form if he had not possessed a commanding personal authority, if he had not been the object of profound and general respect? Augustus would not have been able to govern so great an empire for more than forty years with such slight means had it not been for the fact, fortunate alike for himself and for the state, that he did enjoy this profound, sincere, and general admiration. Tiberius, on the other hand, who was already decidedly unpopular when he came into power, had seen this unpopularity increase during the first six years of his rule, despite all the efforts he had put forth to govern well. His solicitude about

From busts in the Museo Nazionale, Naples

TYPES OF HEAD-DRESSES WORN IN THE TIME OF THE WOMEN OF THE CÆSARS

maintaining a certain order within the state was described as haughtiness and harshness, his preoccupation lest the precarious resources of the government be dissipated in useless expenditures was dubbed avarice, and the prudence which had impelled him to restrain the rash policy of expansion and aggression which Germanicus had tried to initiate beyond the Rhine was construed as envy and surly malignity. Against all considerations of justice, logic, or good sense, this accusation was repeated, and now that destiny had cut down Germanicus, he was accused *sotto voce* of being responsible for his death by many of the great families of Rome and even in senatorial circles. They treated it as most natural that through jealousy he should poison his own nephew, his adopted son, the popular descendant of Drusus, the son of that virtuous Antonia who was his best and most faithful friend! But if, after having been accepted as true by the great families of Rome who sent it on its rounds, such a report had been allowed to circulate through the empire, how much author-

ity would have been left to an emperor who was suspected of so terrible a crime? How could he have maintained discipline in the army, of which he was the head, and order among the people of Rome, of whom, as tribune, he was the great protector? How could he have directed, urged on, or restrained the senate, of which he was, in the language of today, the president? The various Italian peoples from whom the army was drawn did not yet consider the head of the state a being so superior to the laws that it would be permissible for him to commit crimes which were branded as disgustingly repulsive to ordinary human nature.

No historian who understands the affairs of the world in general, and the story of the first century of the empire in particular, will attribute to ferocity or to the tyrannical spirit of Tiberius the increasingly harsh application of the *Lex de majestate* which followed the death of Germanicus and the trial of Piso. This harshness was the natural reaction against the delirium of atrocious calumnies against Ti-

berius which raged in the aristocracy of that time and especially in the house of Agrippina. For she, in spite of the undeniably virtuous character of her private life, was influenced by friends who, for motives of political advancement took advantage of her passions and inexperience.

Too credulous of Tacitus, many writers have severely characterized the facility and the severity with which the senate condemned those accused under the *Lex de majestate:* they consider it an indication of ignoble servility toward the emperor. Yet we know very well that the Roman senate at that time was not composed merely of adulators and hirelings; it still included many men of intelligence and character. We can explain this severity only by admitting that there were many persons in the senate who judged that the emperor could not be left defenseless against the wild slanders of the great families, since these extravagant and insidious calumnies compromised not only the prestige and the fame of the ruler, but also the tranquillity, the power, and the

integrity of the empire. Undoubtedly the *Lex de majestate* did give rise in time to false accusations, to private reprisals, and to unjust sentences of condemnation. Although it had been devised to defend the prestige of the state in the person of the magistrates who represented it, the law was frequently invoked by senators who wished to vent their fiercest personal hatreds. Nor can it be denied that cupidity was the cause of many iniquitous calumnies directed against wealthy persons whose fortunes were coveted by their accusers. Yet we must go slow in accusing Tiberius of these excesses. Tacitus himself, who was averse to the emperor, recounts several incidents which show him in the act of intervening in trials of high treason for the benefit of the accused precisely for the purpose of hindering these excesses of private vengeance. The accounts which we have of many other trials are so brief and so biased that it is not fair for us to hazard a judgment.

We do know, however, that after the death of Germanicus there was formed at Rome, in the imperial family and the senate, a party of

Agrippina, which began an implacable war upon Tiberius, and that Tiberius, the so-called tyrant, was at the beginning very weak, undecided, and vacillating in his resistance to this new opposition. His opponents did not spare his person; they did their best to spread the belief that the emperor was a poisoner, and persecuted him relentlessly with this calumny; they were already pushing forward Nero, the first-born son of Germanicus, though in 21 A.D. he was only fourteen years old, in order that he might in time be made the rival of Tiberius. The latter, indeed, tried at first to moderate the charges of high treason, his supreme defense; he feigned that he did not know or did not see many things, and instead of resisting, he began to make long sojourns away from Rome, thus turning over the capital, in which the pretorian guard remained, to the calumnies of his enemies. Of all these enemies the most terrible was Agrippina, who, passionate, vehement, without judgment, abused in good faith both the relationship which protected her and the pity which her misfortune had aroused. She

allowed no occasion for taunting Tiberius with his pretended crime to escape her, using to this end not only words, but scenes and actions, which impressed the public even more strongly than open accusations could have done. A supper to which Tiberius had invited her became famous at Rome, for at it she refused obstinately and ostentatiously to touch any food or drink whatever, to the astonishment of the guests, who understood perfectly what her gestures meant. And such calumnies and such affronts Tiberius answered only with a weary and disdainful inertia; at most, when his patience was exhausted, some bitter and concise reproof would escape him.

I have no doubt that Tiberius had resolved at the beginning to avoid all harsh measures as far as possible; for unpopular, misunderstood, and detested as he was, he did not dare to use violence against a large part of the aristocracy and against his own house. Furthermore, Agrippina was the least intelligent of the women of the family, and her senseless opposition could be tolerated as long as Livia and

Antonia, the two really serious ladies of the family, sided with Tiberius. But it is easy to understand that this situation could not long endure. A power which defends itself weakly against the attacks of its enemies is destined to sink rapidly into a decline, and the party of Agrippina would therefore quickly have gained favor and power had there not arisen, to sustain the vacillating strength of Tiberius, a man whose name was to become sadly famous—Sejanus—the commander of the pretorian guard.

Sejanus belonged to an obscure family of knights—to what we should now call the *bourgeoisie*. He was not a senator, and he held no great political position; for his charge as commander of the guard was a purely military office. In ordinary times he would have remained a secondary personage, exclusively concerned with the exacting duties of his command; but the party of Agrippina with its intrigues, and the weakness and uncertainty of Tiberius, made of him, however, for a certain time, a formidable power. It is not difficult to

see whence this power arose. The loyalty of the pretorian guard, upon which depended the security and the safety of the imperial authority, was one of the things which must seriously have preoccupied Tiberius, particularly in the face of the persistent and insidious intrigues and accusations of the party of Agrippina. The guard lived at Rome, in continual contact with the senate and the imperial house. Everything which was said in the senatorial circles or in the palaces of the emperor or of his relatives was quickly repeated among the cohorts, and the memory of Drusus and Germanicus was deeply venerated by the pretorians. If the guard could have been persuaded that the emperor was a poisoner of his kindred, their loyalty would have been exposed to numberless intrigues and attempts at seduction. In such a condition of affairs, a commander of the guard who could inspire Tiberius with a complete and absolute trust might easily acquire a great influence over him. Sejanus knew how to inspire this trust. This was partly by reason of his origin, for the equestrian order, on account of

From the painting by Albert Baur

Owned by Mr. Henry Schultheis

A ROMAN FEAST IN THE TIME OF THE CÆSARS

its ancient rivalry with the senatorial nobility, was more favorably inclined than the latter toward the imperial authority; and partly also on account of certain reforms which he had succeeded in introducing into the pretorian guard.

Once he had acquired the emperor's confidence, the ambitious and intelligent prefect of the pretorians proceeded to render himself indispensable in all things. The moment was favorable; Tiberius was becoming more and more wearied of his many affairs, of his many struggles, of his countless responsibilities; more and more disgusted with Rome, with its society, with the too frequent contact with the men whom it was his fate to govern. He was in the earlier stages of that settled melancholy which grew deeper and deeper in the last ten years of his life, and which had grown upon him as the result of long antagonisms, of great bitterness, and of continual terrors and suspicions; and if it is true that Tiberius was addicted to the vice of heavy drinking, as we hear from ancient writers, the abuse of wine may

also have had its part in producing it. The tyrant, as historians have been pleased to call him, did actually seem to weaken in the fight for those ideals in which he had so long and so ardently believed. He tried to please the people by advocating no measures that might seem harsh or excessive to them. He even resisted, in the year 22 A.D., the pressure that his own party—his own puritan party—brought to bear upon him to apply with the utmost severity and discipline the laws against the fast increasing luxury of the men and women of his day. His reply to such pressure was a letter to the senate in which he deplored, among other things, the passion that so many women were showing for jewels and precious stones imported from distant countries. He maintained that it was the fault of such women that so much gold left the country and pointed out how much more wisely the money could be spent in fortifying the boundaries of the empire.

In view of all this it is not difficult to understand why the man who for many years had

done everything for himself, who had never wished to have either counselors or confidants about him, now that he was growing old needed the support of younger energies and of stronger wills. But in his family he could rely only upon his son Drusus, who had now become a serious and trustworthy man, and in the year 22 A.D. he asked the senate that it concede to his son the tribunician power; that is, that they make him his colleague. But the son did not suffice, and Sejanus therefore succeeded in making himself, together with Drusus, in fact, if not in name, the first and most active and influential collaborator and counselor of Tiberius. He was even more active and influential than Drusus, for the latter was frequently absent on distant military missions to the confines of the empire, while Sejanus, as commander of the pretorian guard, was virtually always at Rome, where the emperor now appeared less and less frequently.

Such was the origin of the anomalous power of this man, who was not even a senator—a power which was the result of the weakness of

Tiberius and of the fierce discords which divided the aristocracy; and it was a power which must of necessity prove disastrous, especially to the party of Agrippina and Germanicus. Although indications are not lacking that there was no great harmony or friendship between Sejanus and Drusus, it is evident that Sejanus, as the energetic representative of the interests of Tiberius, must have directed all his efforts against the friends of Agrippina, who was arousing the fiercest opposition to the emperor. But in the year 23, an unforeseen event seemed suddenly to change the situation and to render possible a reconciliation between Tiberius and the party of Agrippina. In this year, Drusus also, like so many other members of his family, died prematurely, at the age of thirty-eight, and on this occasion, for the time being, at least, no one raised the cry of poisoning. This unexpected misfortune moved Tiberius profoundly, for he dearly loved his son, and it seemed for a moment to determine the triumph of Agrippina's party. Now that his son

From a drawing by André Castaigne

DEPOSITING THE ASHES OF A MEMBER OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY IN A ROMAN COLUMBARIUM

had been taken from him, where, if not among the sons of Germanicus and Agrippina, could Tiberius look for a successor? And, as a further proof that Tiberius desired as far as possible to avoid conflict in the bosom of his family, he did not hesitate a moment, despite all the annoyances and difficulties which he had suffered at the hands of Agrippina and her friends. He officially recognized that in the sons of Germanicus were henceforth placed the future hopes of his family and of the empire. Of the two elder, Nero was now sixteen and Drusus was somewhat younger, though we do not know his exact age. These he summoned to appear before the senate, and he presented them to the assembly with a noble discourse the substance of which Tacitus has preserved for us, exhorting the youths and the senate to fulfil their respective duties for the greatness and the prosperity of the republic.

After the death of Drusus, therefore, a reconciliation became possible in the family of the Cæsars. The latent rivalry between the fam-

ilies of Tiberius and Germanicus was extinguished. Indeed, even in the midst of the tears shed for the early death of Drusus, a gleam of concord seems to have shone down upon the house desolated by many tragedies, while Sejanus, whose power depended upon the strife of the factions, was for a moment set aside and driven back into the shadows. But it was not to continue long; for soon the flames of discord broke out more violently than ever. Whom shall we blame, Sejanus or Agrippina? Tacitus says that it was the fault of Sejanus, whom he accuses of having tried to destroy the descendants of Germanicus, in order to usurp their place: but he himself is forced to admit in another passage (Annals iv., 59) that virtually a little court of freedmen and dependents gathered about Nero, the leader of the sons of Germanicus, urging him on against Tiberius and Sejanus, and begging him to act quickly. "This," they said, "is the will of the people, the desire of the armies. Nor would Sejanus, who was even then making light of the patience of the old man and of

the dilatoriness of the youth, have dared to resist him." From such speeches it is only a short step to plans for rebellion and conspiracy. In all probability the blame for this later and more bitter dissension must, as usually happens, be divided between the two factions. The party of Agrippina, emboldened by its good fortune and by the weakness of Tiberius, was, after the death of Drusus, conscious of its own supremacy. Its members had only a single aim; even before it was possible they wished to see Nero, the first-born son of Germanicus, in the position of Tiberius. They therefore took up again their struggles and intrigues against Tiberius, and attempted to incite Nero against the emperor. But this time Sejanus was blocking their pathway. The death of Drusus had even further increased the trust and affection which the emperor had for his assistant, and he was henceforth the only confidant and the only friend of the emperor; a war without quarter between him and Agrippina, her sons and the party of Germanicus, was inevitable. And

Sejanus opened the action by attempting to exclude from the magistracy and from office all the friends of Agrippina and all the members of the opposing faction. At this time it was difficult to arrive at any of the more important offices without being recommended to the senate by the emperor, against whose choice the senate no longer dared to rebel; since the emperor was held responsible for the conduct of the government, it was only just that he should be allowed to select his more important collaborators. Sejanus was therefore able, by using his influence over Tiberius, to lay a thousand difficulties and obstacles in the way of even the legitimate ambitions of the most eminent men of the opposite faction. Nor were these the only weapons employed; others no less efficacious were called into play, and intrigues, calumnies, accusations, and trials were set on foot without scruple and with a ferocity the horror of which Tacitus has painted with indelible colors. Among these intrigues two matrimonial projects must be mentioned. In the year 25 Sejanus attempted

From a drawing by André Castaigne

THE STARVING LIVILLA REFUSING FOOD

a bold stroke; he repudiated his wife Apicata, and asked Tiberius for the hand of Livilla (Livia), the widow of Drusus. Sejanus had frequented the political aristocracy of the empire, and, despite his equestrian origin, was quick to adopt not only their ambitions and their manners, but also their ideas on marriage. He, too, considered it as simply a political instrument, a means of acquiring and consolidating power. He had therefore disrupted his first family in order to contract this marriage, which would have redoubled his power and his influence and have introduced him into the imperial household. But his bold stroke failed, because Tiberius refused; and he refused, Tacitus tells us, above all because he was afraid that this marriage would still further irritate Agrippina. The emperor is supposed to have told Sejanus that too many feminine quarrels were already disturbing and agitating the house of the Cæsars, to the serious detriment of his nephew's sons. And what would happen, he asked, if this marriage should still further foment existing hatreds?

Quid si intendatur certamen tali conjugio? The reply is significant, because it proves to us that Tiberius, who is accused of harboring a fierce hate against the sons of Germanicus and Agrippina, was still seeking, two years after the death of Drusus, to appease both factions, attempting not to irritate his adversaries and to preserve a reasonable equanimity in the midst of these animosities and these struggles.

In any case, Sejanus was refused, and this refusal was a slight success for the party of Agrippina, which, a year later, in 26, attempted on its own account an analogous move. Agrippina asked Tiberius for permission to remarry. If we are to believe Tacitus, Agrippina made this request on her own initiative, impelled by one of those numerous and more or less reasonable caprices which were continually shooting through her head. But are we to suppose that suddenly, after a long widowhood, Agrippina put forth so strange a proposal without any *arrière-pensée* whatever? Furthermore, if this proposal had been merely the momentary caprice of a whimsical woman,

would it have been so seriously debated in the imperial household, and would the daughter of Agrippina have recounted the episode in her memoirs? It is more probable that this marriage, too, had a political aim. By giving a husband to Agrippina, they were also seeking to give a leader to the anti-Tiberian party. The sons of Germanicus were too young, and Agrippina was too violent and tactless, to be able alone to cope successfully with Sejanus, supported as he was by Tiberius, by Livia, and by Antonia. We can thus explain why Tiberius opposed and prevented the marriage: Agrippina, unassisted, had caused him sufficient trouble; it would have been entirely superfluous for him to sanction her taking to herself an official counselor in the guise of a husband.

This time Sejanus triumphed over the ill success of his rivals, and the struggle continued in this manner between the two parties, but with an increasing advantage to Sejanus. Beginning with the year 26, we see numerous indications that the party of Agrippina and Germanicus was no longer able to resist the

blows and machinations of Sejanus, who detached from it, one after another, all the men of any importance. He either won them over to himself through his favors and his promises, or he frightened them with his threats; and those who resisted most tenaciously, he destroyed with his suits.

Tiberius was the storm-center of these struggles, and contrary to what legend has reported, he attempted as far as he was able to prevent the two parties from going to extremes. But what pain, repugnance, and fatigue it must have cost him to make the effort necessary for maintaining a last ray of reason and justice among so many evil passions, animosities, ambitions, and rivalries! It must have cost him dearly, for he had grown up in the time when the dream of a great restoration of the aristocracy was luring the upper classes of Rome with its fairest and most luminous smile. As a young man he had known and loved Vergil, Horace, and Livy, the two poets and the historian of this great dream; like all the elect spirits of those now distant years, he had seen

behind this vision a great senate, a glorious and terrible army, an austere and revered republic like that which Livy had pictured with glowing colors in his immortal pages.

Instead of all this, he was now forced to take his place at the head of this decadent and wretched nobility, which seemed to be interested only in rending itself asunder with calumnies, denunciations, suits, and scandalous condemnations, and which repaid him for all that he had done and was still doing for its safety and the prosperity of the empire by directing against his name the most atrocious calumnies, the fiercest railleries, and every sort of ridiculous and infamous legend. He had dreamed of victories over the enemies of Rome, and he had to resign himself to struggling day and night against the hysterical extravagance of Agrippina: he had to be content, even without the sure hope of success, if he could convince the majority that he was not a poisoner. Authority without glory or respect, power divorced from the means sufficient for its exercise—such was the situation in which

the successor of Augustus, the second emperor, after twelve years of a difficult and trying reign, found himself. He no longer felt himself safe at Rome, where he feared rightly or wrongly that his life was being continually threatened, and it is not astonishing that, old, wearied, and disgusted, between the years 26 and 27 he should have retired definitely to Capri, seeking to hide his misanthropy, his weariness, and his disgust with men and things in the wonderful little isle which a delightful caprice of nature had set down in the lap of the divine Bay of Naples.

But instead of the peace he sought at Capri, Tiberius found the infamy of history. How dark and terrible are the memories of him associated with the charming isle, which, violet-tinted, on beautiful sunny days emerges from an azure sea against an azure sky! That fragment of paradise fallen upon the shore of one of the most beautiful seas in the world is said to have been for about ten years a hell of fierce cruelties and abominable vices. Tiberius passed sentence upon himself, in the opinion

of posterity, when he secluded himself in Capri. Ought we, without a further word, to transcribe this sentence? There are, to be sure, no decisive arguments to prove false the accounts about the horrors of Capri which the ancients, and especially Suetonius, have transmitted to us; there are some, however, which make us mistrust and withhold our judgment. Above all, we have the right to ask ourselves how, from whom, and by access to what sources did Suetonius and the other ancients learn so many extraordinary details. It must be remembered that all the great figures in the history of Rome who had many enemies, like Sylla, Cæsar, Antony, and Augustus himself, were accused of having scandalous habits. Precisely because the puritan tradition was strong at Rome, such an accusation did much harm, and for this reason, whether true or false, enemies were glad to repeat it whenever they wished to discredit a character. Lastly, all the ancient writers, even the most hostile, tell us that up to a ripe age Tiberius preserved his exemplary habits. Is it likely, then, that

suddenly, when already old, he should have soiled himself with all the vices? At all events, if there is any truth contained in these accounts, we can at most conclude that as an old man Tiberius became subject to some mental infirmity and that the man who took refuge at Capri was no longer entirely sane.

Certain it is, in any case, that after his retirement to Capri, Tiberius seriously neglected public affairs, and that Sejanus was finally looked upon at Rome as the *de facto* emperor. The bulletins and reports which were sent from the empire and from Rome to the emperor passed through his hands, as well as the decisions which Tiberius sent back to the state. At Rome, in all affairs of serious or slight importance, the senators turned to Sejanus, and about him, whom all fell into the habit of considering as the true emperor, a court and party were formed. In fear of his great power, the senators and the old aristocracy suppressed the envy which the dizzy rise of this obscure knight had aroused. Rome suffered without protest that a man of obscure

From the statue in Rome

COSTUME OF A CHIEF VESTAL
(VIRGO VESTALIS MAXIMA)

birth should rule the empire in the place of a descendant of the great Claudian family, and the senators of the most illustrious houses grew accustomed to paying him court. Worse still, virtually all of them aided him, either by openly favoring him or by allowing him a free hand, to complete the decisive destruction of the party and the family of Germanicus,—of that same Germanicus of whom all had been fond and whose memory the people still venerated.

After the retirement of Tiberius to Capri, all felt that Agrippina and her sons were inevitably doomed sooner or later to succumb in the duel with the powerful, ambitious, and implacable prefect of the pretorians who represented Tiberius at Rome. Only a few generous idealists remained faithful to the conquered, who were now near their destruction; such supporters as might possibly ease the misery of ruin, but not ward it off or avoid it. Among these last faithful and heroic friends was a certain Titius Sabinus, and the implacable Sejanus destroyed him with a suit of which

Tacitus has given us an account, a horrible story of one of the most abominable judicial machinations which human perfidy can imagine. Dissensions arose to aggravate the already serious danger in which Agrippina and her friends had been placed. Nero, the first-born son, and Drusus, the second, became hostile at the very moment when they should have united against the ruthless adversary who wished to exterminate them all. A last rock of refuge remained to protect the family of Germanicus. It was Livia, the revered old lady who had been present at the birth of the fortunes of Augustus and the new imperial authority, and who had held in her arms that infant world which had been born in the midst of the convulsions of the civil wars, and a little later had watched it try its first steps on the pathway of history. Livia did not much love Agrippina, whose hatred and intrigues against Tiberius she had always blamed; but she was too wise and too solicitous of the prestige of the family to allow Sejanus entirely to destroy the house of Germanicus. As long as she

lived, Agrippina and Nero could dwell safely in Rome. But Livia was feeble, and in the beginning of 29, at the age of eighty-six, she died. The catastrophe which had been carefully prepared by Sejanus was now consummated; a few months after the death of Livia, Agrippina and Nero were subjected to a suit, and, under an accusation of having conspired against Tiberius, were condemned to exile by the senate. Shortly after his condemnation, Nero committed suicide.

The account which Tacitus gives us of this trial is obscure, involved, and fragmentary, for the story is broken off at its most important point by an unfortunate lacuna in the manuscript. The other historians add but little light with their brief phrases and passing allusions. We do not therefore entirely understand either the contents of the charges, the reason for the condemnation, the stand taken by the accused, or the conduct of Tiberius with regard to the accusation. It seems hardly probable that Agrippina and Nero could have been truly guilty of a real conspiracy against Tiberius.

Isolated as they had been by Sejanus after the retirement of Tiberius to Capri, they would scarcely have been able to set a conspiracy on foot, even if they had so desired. They were paying the penalty for the long war of calumnies and slanders which they had waged upon Tiberius, for the aversion and the scorn which they had always shown for him. In this course of conduct many senators had encouraged them as long as Tiberius alone had not dared to have recourse to violent and cruel measures in order to make himself respected by his family. But such acts of disrespect became serious crimes for the unfortunate woman and her hapless son, even in the eyes of the senators who had encouraged them to commit them, now that Sejanus had reinvigorated the imperial authority with his energy, and now that all felt that behind Tiberius and in his name and place there was acting a man of decision who knew how to punish his enemies and to reward his friends.

The trial and condemnation of Agrippina and Nero were certainly the machinations of

From a photograph

Copyright by Anderson

REMAINS OF THE HOUSE OF THE VESTAL VIRGINS

Sejanus, who carried along with him not only the senate and the friends of the imperial family, but perhaps even Tiberius himself. They prove how much Sejanus had been able to strengthen imperial authority, which had been hesitating and feeble in the last decade. Sejanus had dared to do what Tiberius had never succeeded in doing; he had destroyed that center of opposition which gathered about Agrippina in the house of Germanicus. It is therefore scarcely necessary to say that the ruin of Agrippina still further increased the power of Sejanus. All bowed trembling before the man who had dared humiliate the very family of the Julio-Claudii. Honors were showered upon his head; he was made senator and pontifex; he received the proconsular power; there was talk of a marriage between him and the widow of Nero; and it was finally proposed that he be named consul for five years. Indeed, in 31, through the will of Tiberius, he actually became the colleague of the emperor himself in the consulate. He needed only the tribunician power to make him the

official collaborator of the emperor and his designated successor. Every one at Rome, furthermore, considered him the future prince.

But having arrived at this height, Sejanus's head was turned, and he asked himself why he should exercise the rule and have all its burdens and dangers while he left to others the pomp, the honors, and the advantages. Although Tiberius allowed the senate to heap honors upon his faithful prefect of the pretorians, and though he himself showed his gratitude to him in many ways, even going to the point of being willing to give him the widow of Nero in marriage, he never really expected to take him as his colleague or to designate him as his successor. Tiberius was a Claudian, and that a knight without ancestry should be placed at the head of the Roman aristocracy was to him unthinkable; after the exile of Nero he had cast his eyes upon Caius, another son of Germanicus, as his possible successor. Nor had he hidden his intention: he had even clearly expressed it in different speeches to the senate. Therefore Sejanus

must finally have come to the conclusion that if he continued to defend Tiberius and his interests, he could no longer hope for anything from him, and might even compromise the influence and the popularity which he had already acquired. Tiberius was hated and detested, there was a numerous party opposed to him in the senate, and he was extremely unpopular among the masses. Many admired Sejanus through spiteful hatred of Tiberius, for it amounted to saying that they preferred to be governed by an obscure knight rather than by an old and detested Claudian who had shut himself up in Capri.

And thus Sejanus seems to have deluded himself into believing that if he succeeded in doing away with the emperor, he could easily take his position by setting aside the young son of Germanicus and profiting by the popularity which the fall of Tiberius would bring him. Little by little he came to an understanding with the enemies of Tiberius and prepared a conspiracy for the final overthrow of the odious government of the son of Livia. Many

senators had agreed to this, and certainly few conspiracies were ever organized under more favorable auspices. Tiberius was old, disgusted with everything and everybody, and alone in Capri; he had virtually not a single friend in Rome; what happened in the world he knew only through what Sejanus told him. He was therefore entirely in the hands of the man who was preparing to sacrifice him to the tenacious hatred of the people and the senatorial aristocracy. Young, energetic, and the favorite of fortune, Sejanus had with him a formidable party in the senate, he was the commander of the prætorian guard,—that is, of the only military force stationed in Italy,—and he had terrified with his implacable persecutions all those whom he had failed to win over through his promises or his favors. Could the duel between this misanthropic old man and this vigorous, energetic, ruthless climber end in any other way than with the defeat of the former?

But now stepping forward suddenly from the shadows to which she had retired, a lady

From a photograph by Alinari of the marble in the Uffizi.

BUST, SUPPOSED TO BE OF ANTONIA—DAUGHTER OF MARK ANTONY AND OCTAVIA—AND MOTHER OF GERMANICUS

appeared, threw herself between the two contestants, and changed the fate of the combat. It was Antonia, the daughter of the famous triumvir, the revered widow of Drusus.

After the death of Livia, Antonia was the most respected personage of the imperial family in Rome. She still watched, withdrawn but alert, over the destiny of the house now virtually destroyed by death, dissensions, the cruelty of the laws, and the relentless anger of the aristocracy. It was she who scented out the plot, and quickly and courageously she informed Tiberius. The latter, in danger and in Capri, displayed again the energy and sagacity of his best period. The danger was most threatening, especially because Sejanus was the commander of the pretorian guard. Tiberius beguiled him with friendly letters, dangling in front of him the hope that he had conceded to him the tribunician power,—that is, that he had made him his colleague,—while at the same time he secretly took measures to appoint a successor for him. Suddenly Sejanus learned that he was no longer commander of

the guard, and that the emperor had accused him before the senate of conspiracy. In an instant, under this blow, the fortunes of Sejanus collapsed. The envy and the latent hatred against the *parvenu,* the knight who had risen higher than all others, and who had humiliated the senatorial aristocracy with his good fortune, were reawakened, and the senate and public opinion turned fiercely against him. Sejanus, his family, his friends, his accomplices, and those who seemed to be his accomplices, were put to death after summary trials by the fury of the mob; and in Rome blood flowed in torrents.

Antonia might now have enjoyed the satisfaction of having saved through her foresight not only Tiberius, but the entire family, when suddenly one of the surges of that fierce tempest of ambitions and hatreds tore from her side even her own daughter, Livilla, the widow of Drusus, and cast her as a prey into that sea of blind popular frenzy. The reader has perhaps not forgotten that eight years before, when Sejanus was hoping to marry Livilla, he

had repudiated his first wife, Apicata. Apicata had not wished to outlive the ruin of her former husband, and she killed herself, but only after having written Tiberius a letter in which she accused Livilla of having poisoned Drusus through connivance with Sejanus, whom she wished to marry. I confess that this accusation seems to me hardly probable, and I do not believe that the denunciation of Apicata is sufficient ground for admitting it. Above all, it is well to inquire what proofs Apicata could have had of this crime, and how she could have procured them even if the crime had been committed. Since the two accomplices would have been obliged to hide their infamous deed from all, there was no one from whom they would have concealed it more carefully than from Apicata. We must further note that it is not probable that a cautious man, as Sejanus was in the year 23, would have thought of committing so serious a crime as that of poisoning the son of his protector. For what reason would he have done so? He did not then think of succeeding Tiberius; by removing Drusus, he

would merely have improved the situation of the family of Germanicus, which at that time was already hostile to him and with which he was preparing to struggle. Instead, might not this accusation *in extremis* be the last vengeance of a repudiated woman against the rival who for a moment had threatened to take the position from which she herself had been driven? Apicata did not belong to the aristocracy, and, unlike the ladies of the senatorial families, she had not therefore been brought up with the idea of having to serve docilely as an instrument for the political career of her own husband. Perhaps her denunciation was the revenge of feminine jealousy, of that passion which the lower orders of Roman society did not extinguish in the hearts of their women as did the aristocracy.

This denunciation, however,—we know this from the pages of ancient writers,—was one of the most terrible griefs of Tiberius's old age. He had loved his son tenderly, and the idea of leaving so horrible a crime unpunished, in case the accusation was true, drove him to despera-

tion. Yet, on the other hand, Livilla, the presumptive criminal, was the daughter of his faithful friend, of that Antonia who had saved him from the treacheries of Sejanus. As for the public, ever ready to believe all the infamies which were reported of the imperial house, it was firmly convinced that Livilla was an abominable poisoner. A great trial was set on foot; many suspects were put to torture, which is evidence that they were arriving at no definite conclusions, and this was probably because they were seeking for the proofs of an imaginary crime. Livilla, however, did not survive the scandal, the accusations, the suspicions of Tiberius, and the distrust of those about her. Because she was the daughter of Drusus and the daughter-in-law of Tiberius, because she belonged to the family which fortune had placed at the head of the immense empire of Rome, she would not be able to persuade any one that she was innocent. The obscure woman, without ancestry, who was accusing her from the grave, would be taken at her word by every one; she would convince

posterity and history; against all reason she would prevail over the greatness of Livilla! So Livilla took refuge in her mother's house and starved herself to death, for she was unable to outlive an accusation which it was impossible to refute.

Tiberius's reign continued for six years after this terrible tragedy, but it was only a species of slow death-agony. The year 33 saw still another tragic event—the suicide of Agrippina and her son Drusus. Of the race of Germanicus there remained alive only one son, Caius (the later Emperor Caligula), and three daughters, of whom the eldest, Agrippina, the mother of Nero, had been married a few years before to the descendant of one of the greatest houses of Rome, Cnæus Domitius Enobarbus. Tiberius still remained as the last relic of a bygone time to represent ideas and aspirations which were henceforth lost causes, amid the ruins and the tombs of his friends. Posterity, following in the footsteps of Tacitus, has held him and his dark nature alone responsible for this ruin. We ought to believe instead that he

was a man born to a loftier and more fortunate destiny, but that he had to pay the penalty for the unique eminence to which fortune had exalted him. Like the members of his family who had been driven into exile, who had died before their time, who had been driven to suicide in despair, he, too, was the victim of a tragic situation full of insoluble contradictions; and precisely because he was destined to live, he was perhaps the most unfortunate victim of them all.

V

THE SISTERS OF CALIGULA AND THE MARRIAGE OF MESSALINA

AFTER the death of Tiberius (37 A.D.), the problem of the succession presented to the senate was not an easy one. In his will, Tiberius had adopted, and thereby designated to the senate as his successors, Caius Caligula, the son of Germanicus, and Tiberius, the son of his own son Drusus. The latter was only seventeen, and too young for such a responsibility. Caligula was twenty-seven, and therefore still very young, although by straining a point he might be emperor; yet he did not enjoy a good reputation. If we except him, there was no other member of the family old enough to govern except Tiberius Claudius Nero, the brother of Germanicus and the only surviving son of Drusus and Antonia. He was generally considered a fool, was the laughing-stock of freedmen and women, and such a gawk and

From the bust in the Capitoline Museum, Rome

CALIGULA

clown that it had been impossible to put him into the magistracy. Indeed, he was not even a senator when Tiberius died.

As they could not consider him, there remained only Caligula, unless they wished to go outside the family of Augustus, which, if not impossible, was at least difficult and dangerous. For the provinces, the German barbarians, and especially the soldiers of the legions, were accustomed to look upon this family as the mainstay of the empire. The legions had become specially attached to the memory and to the race of Drusus and Germanicus, who still lived in the minds of the soldiers as witnesses to their former exploits and virtues. During the long watches of the night, as their names were repeated in speech and story, their shades, idealized by death, returned again to revisit the camps on the banks of the Rhine and the Danube. The veneration and affection which the armies had once felt for the Roman nobility were now centered about the family of Augustus. In this difficulty, therefore, the senate chose the lesser evil, and, annulling a

part of the testament of Tiberius, elected Caligula, the son of Germanicus, as their emperor.

The death of Tiberius, however, was destined to show the Romans for the first time that although it was hard to find an emperor, it might even be harder to find an empress. During the long reign of Augustus, Livia had discharged the duties of this difficult position with incomparable success. Tiberius had succeeded Augustus, and after his divorce from Julia had never remarried. There had therefore been a long interregnum in the Roman world of feminine society, during which no one had ever stopped to think whether it would be easy or difficult to find a woman who could with dignity take over the position of Livia. The problem was really presented for the first time with the advent of Caligula; for, at twenty-seven, he could not solve it as simply as Tiberius had done. In the first place, it was to be expected that a man of his age would have a wife; secondly, the *Lex de maritandis ordinibus* made marriage a necessity for him, as for all the senators; furthermore, the head of the state

needed to have a woman at his side, if he wished to discharge all his social duties. The celibacy of Tiberius had undoubtedly contributed to the social isolation which had been fatal both to him and to the state.

Therefore in Caligula's time the Roman public became aware that the problem confronting it was a most difficult one. A most exacting public opinion, hesitating between the ideals of two epochs, wished to see united in the empress the best part, both of the ancient and of the modern customs, and was consequently demanding that the second Livia should possess virtually every quality. It was necessary that she should be of noble birth; that is, a descendant of one of those great Roman families which with every year were becoming less numerous, less prolific, less virtuous, and more fiercely divided among themselves by irreconcilable hatreds. This latter was a most serious difficulty; for by marrying into one of these lines, the emperor ran the risk of antagonizing all those other families which were its enemies. The empress, furthermore, must be the model

of all the virtues; fruitful, in order to obey the *Lex de maritandis ordinibus;* religious, chaste, and virtuous, that she might not violate the *Lex de adulteriis;* simple and modest, in deference to the *Lex sumptuaria.* She must be able to rule wisely over the vast household of the emperor, full of his slaves and freedmen, and she must aid her husband in the fulfilment of all those social duties—receptions, dinners, entertainments—which, though serious concerns for every Roman nobleman, were even more serious for the emperor. That she should be stupid or ignorant was of course out of the question. In fact, from this time to the downfall of Nero the difficulties of the imperial family and its authority arise not so much from the emperors as from their wives; so that it may truly be said that it was the women who unwittingly dragged down to its ruin the great Julio-Claudian house.

But if the difficulty was serious, there never was a man so little fitted and so ill prepared to face it as this young man of twenty-seven who had been exalted to the imperial dignity after

From the collection of Professor G. N. Olcott

A BRONZE SESTERTIUS (SLIGHTLY ENLARGED) SHOWING THE SISTERS OF CALIGULA (AGRIPPINA, DRUSILLA, AND JULIA LIVILLA) ON ONE SIDE AND GERMANICUS ON THE OTHER SIDE

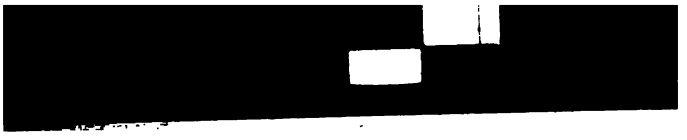
Enlarged from the original owned by Professor G. N. Olcott

A BRONZE SESTERTIUS WITH THE HEAD OF AGRIPPINA THE ELDER, DAUGHTER OF AGRIPPA AND JULIA, THE DAUGHTER OF AUGUSTUS

She was the wife of Germanicus, and their daughter, Agrippina the younger, was the mother of the Emperor Nero

the death of Tiberius. Four years before his election as emperor, he had married a certain Julia Claudilla, a lady who doubtless belonged to one of the great Roman families, but about whom we have no definite information. We cannot say, therefore, whether or not at the side of a second Augustus she might have become a new Livia. In any case, it is certain that Caligula was not a second Augustus. He was probably not so frenzied a lunatic as ancient writers have pictured him, but his was certainly an extravagant, unbalanced mind, given to excesses, and unhinged by the delirium of greatness, which his coming to the throne had increased the more because it had been conferred upon him at a time when he was too young and before he had been sufficiently prepared. For many years Caligula had never even hoped to succeed Tiberius; he had continually feared that the fate of his mother and his two brothers was likewise waiting for him. Far from having dreamed that he would be raised to the imperial purple, he had merely desired that he might not have

to end his days as an exile on some desert island in the Mediterranean. So much good fortune after the long persecutions of his family profoundly disturbed his mental faculties, which had not originally been well balanced, and it fomented in him that delirium of grandeur which violently directed his desires toward distant Egypt, in the customs of which, rather than in those of Rome, he, in the exaltation of power, sought satisfaction for his imperial vanity. From his earliest youth Caligula had shown a great inclination for the products and the men of that far country, then greatly admired and greatly feared by the Romans. For instance, we know that all his servants were Egyptians, and that Helicon, his most faithful and influential freedman, was an Alexandrian. But shortly after his elevation this admiration for the land of the Ptolemies and the Pharaohs broke forth into a furor of Egyptian exoticism, which impelled him to an attempt to bring his own reign into connection with the policies of his great-grandfather Mark Antony. He sought to introduce into Rome



the ideas, the customs, the sumptuousness, and the institutions of the Pharaoh-Ptolemaic monarchy, to make of his palace a court similar to that of Alexandria, and of himself a divine king, adored in flesh and blood, as sovereigns were adored on the banks of the Nile.

Caligula was undoubtedly mad, but his madness would have seemed less chaotic and incomprehensible, and a thread of sense would have been discovered even in his excesses and in the ravings of his unsettled mind, if it had been understood that many of his most famous freaks were moved and inspired by this Egyptian idea and tendency. In the madness of Caligula, as in the story of Antony and the tragedy of Tiberius, there is forever recurring, under a new form, the great struggle between Italy and the East, between Rome and Alexandria, which can never be divorced from the history of the last century of the republic and the first century of the empire. Whoever carefully sifts out the separate actions in the disordered conduct of the third Roman emperor will easily rediscover the thread of this idea

and the trace of this latent conflict. For instance, we see the new emperor scarcely elected before he introduced the worship of Isis among the official cults of the Roman state and assigned in the calendar a public festival to Isis. In short, he was favoring those Egyptian cults which Tiberius, with his "old-Roman" sympathies, had fiercely combatted. Furthermore, we see Caligula prohibiting the festival in commemoration of the battle of Actium, which had been celebrated every year for more than half a century. At first sight the idea seems absurd; but it must not be considered a caprice; for with this act Caligula was intending to initiate the historical rehabilitation of Mark Antony, the man who had tried to shift the center of Roman politics from Rome to Alexandria. The emperor meant to make plain to Rome that she was no longer to boast of having humiliated Alexandria with arms, since Alexandria would henceforth be taken as a model in all things.

Just as the dynasty of the Ptolemies had been surrounded by a semi-religious vener-

CLAUDIUS, MESSALINA, AND THEIR TWO CHILDREN IN WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE "HAGUE CAMEO"

ation, Caligula, inspired as he was by Egyptian and Ptolemaic conceptions, sought to have this same veneration bestowed upon his entire family—that family which under Tiberius had been persecuted and defamed by suits and decimated by suicides through the envy of the aristocracy, which was forever unwilling to forgive its too great prestige. Caligula not only hastened to set out in person to gather up the bones of Agrippina, his mother, and of his brother, in order to bring them to Rome and deposit them piously in the tomb of Augustus, —that was a natural duty of filial piety,—but he also prohibited any one to name among his ancestors the great Agrippa, the builder of the Pantheon, because his very obscure origin seemed a blot upon the semi-divine purity of his race. He had the title of Augusta and all the privileges of the vestal virgins bestowed upon his grandmother Antonia, the daughter of Mark Antony and the faithful friend of Tiberius; he had these same vestal privileges bestowed upon his three sisters, Agrippina, Drusilla, and Livilla; he had assigned to them

a privileged position equal to his own at the games in the circus; he even had it decreed that their names should be included in the vows which the magistrates and pontiffs offered every year for the prosperity of the prince and of his people, and that in the prayers for the conservation of his power there should also be included a prayer for their felicity. This was a small revolution from the constitutional point of view; for the Romans, though allowing their women ample freedom to occupy themselves with politics from the retirement of their homes, had never recognized for them any official capacity. Tiberius, faithfully adhering in this also to tradition, had gone as far as to prevent the senate, at the time of Livia's death, from voting public honors to her memory, which, he thought, might have justified the belief that his mother had been, not a matron of the old Roman stamp, but a public personage. Caligula, however, was quite indifferent to tradition, and by his expressed will, as if in reaction against the persecutions and the humiliations which the

imperial family had suffered under Tiberius, even the sisters of the emperor acquired a sacred character and a privileged position in the state. For the first time the women of the imperial family acquired the character of official personages.

It cannot be denied that the transition from atrocious prosecutions to divine honors was somewhat sudden, but this is merely a further proof that Caligula was endowed with a violent, impulsive, and irreflective temperament. In any case, there was neither scandal nor protest at that time. Caligula during the first months of his rule was popular, not for his measures in favor of the women of his family, but for reasons of far greater importance. He had inaugurated a régime which promised to be more indulgent, more prodigal, less harsh than that of Tiberius. Extravagance had made rapid strides, especially in the ranks of the aristocracy, during the twenty-two years of Tiberius's rule: and although the latter, especially toward the end of his life, had ceased struggling against this tendency, nevertheless

his well-known aversion to sumptuous living, and the example of simplicity which he set before the eyes of all, had always been a cause of preoccupation to the aristocracy—to men as well as women. There was no certainty that the emperor might not again, some day, try to enforce the sumptuary laws. When Caligula therefore began his career, indicating very clearly his sympathies with the modernizing party by his eagerness to do away with the old Roman simplicity, the young aristocracy of both sexes did not conceal their satisfaction. After a long period of old-fashioned traditional policy, enforced by the two preceding emperors, they welcomed with joy the young reformer who set out to introduce in the imperial government the spirit of the new generations. No one was sorry that all the purveyors of voluptuousness,—mimes, singers, actors, dancers of both sexes, cooks, and puppets, —should with noisy joy break into the imperial palace, which had been official, severe, and cold under Tiberius, and bring back pleasure, luxury, and festivals. All hoped that

under the rule of this indulgent, youthful emperor, life, especially at Rome, would become more pleasant and gay; and no one therefore felt disposed to protest against the official honors which, contrary to custom, had been bestowed upon the women of the imperial family.

In truth, if he, still harking back to Egyptian ideas and customs, had been content with surrounding his family, especially its women, with a respect which would have protected them against the infamous accusations and iniquitous persecutions to which many had fallen victims, he might have had credit for an action which was good, just, and useful to the state. That strange condition of affairs which had been growing up under Tiberius was both absurd and dangerous to the country: the emperor was honored with extraordinary powers and made the object of a semi-religious veneration; but his family, and especially its women, were, as a sort of retribution, set outside the laws and fiercely assailed in a thousand insidious ways. But the lunatic Caligula was not

the man to keep even a wise proposal within reasonable limits. Power, popularity, and praise quickly aroused all that was warped and excessive in his nature, and very soon, as he showed at the end of the year 37, he entertained an idea which must have seemed to the Romans a horrible impiety. His wife died soon after he became emperor. Another marriage seemed obligatory, and he decided that he would marry his sister Drusilla.

Historians have represented this intention as the perverse delirium of an unbridled sensuality. It was certainly the gross act of a madman, but there was perhaps more politics in his madness than perversity; for it was an attempt to introduce into Rome the dynastic marriages between brothers and sisters which had been the constant tradition of the Ptolemies and the Pharaohs of Egypt. This oriental custom certainly seems a horrible aberration to us, who have been educated according to the strict and austere doctrines of Christianity, which, inheriting in these matters the fine flower of Greco-Latin ideas, has puri-

fied and rendered them more rigorous. But for centuries in Egypt,—that is, in the most ancient of the Mediterranean civilizations,—this horrible aberration was looked upon as a sovereign privilege which brought the royal dynasty into relationship with the gods. By means of it, this family preserved the semi-divine purity of its blood; and perchance this custom, which had survived up to the fall of the Ptolemies, was only the projection of ideas and customs which in most ancient times had had a much wider diffusion along the Mediterranean world, for traces of it can be found even in Greek mythology. For were not Jupiter and Juno, who constituted the august Olympian couple, at the same time also brother and sister? Gradually restricted through the spreading of Greek civilization, this custom was finally eradicated at the shores of the Mediterranean by Rome after the destruction of the kingdom of the Ptolemies.

The lunatic Caligula now suddenly took it into his head to transplant this custom to Rome —to transplant it with all the religious pomp

of the Egyptian monarchy, and thus transform the family of Augustus, which up to the present had been merely the most eminent family of the Roman aristocracy, into a dynasty of gods and demigods, whose members were to be united by marriage among themselves in order not to pollute the celestial purity of their blood. A fraternal and divine pair were to rule at Rome, like another Arsinoë and Ptolemy, whom the Alexandrian throngs had worshiped on the banks of the Nile. The idea had already matured in his mind at the end of the year 37, and among his three sisters he had already chosen Drusilla to be his wife. This is proved by a will made at the time of an illness which he contracted in the autumn of the first year of his rule. In this will he appointed Drusilla heir not only of his goods, but also of his empire, a wild folly from the point of view of Roman ideas, which did not admit women to the government; but it proves that Caligula had already thought and acted like an Egyptian king.

It is easy to understand why the peace and

From a photograph

Copyright by Anderson

REMAINS OF THE BRIDGE OF CALIGULA IN THE PALACE OF THE CÆSARS

harmony which had been reëstablished for a moment in the troubled imperial family by the advent of Caligula should have been of brief duration. His grandmother and his sisters were Romans, educated in Roman ideals, and this exotic madness of his could inspire in them only an irresistible horror. This brought confusion into the imperial family, and after having suffered the persecutions of Sejanus and his party, the unhappy daughters of Germanicus found themselves in the toils of the exacting caprices of their brother. In fact, in 38, Caligula had already broken with his grandmother, whom the year before he had had proclaimed Augusta; and between the years 38 and 39, catastrophes followed one another in the family with frightful rapidity. His sister Drusilla, whom, as Suetonius tells us, he already treated as a lawful wife, died suddenly of some unknown malady while still very young. It is not improbable that her health may have been ruined by the horror of the wild adventure, which was neither human nor Roman, into which her brother sought to drag

her by marriage. Caligula suddenly declared her a goddess, to whom all the cities must pay honors. He had a temple built for her, and appointed a body of twenty priests, ten men and ten women, to celebrate her worship; he decreed that her birthday should be a holiday, and he wished the statue of Venus in the Forum to be carved in her likeness.

But in proportion as Caligula became more and more fervid in this adoration of his dead sister, the disagreement between himself and his other two sisters became more embittered. Julia Livilla was exiled in 38; Agrippina, the wife of Domitius Enobarbus, in 39, and about this same time the venerable Antonia died. It was noised about that Caligula had forced her to commit suicide, and that Agrippina and Livilla had taken part in a conspiracy against the life of the emperor. How much truth there may be in these reports it is difficult to say, but the reason for all these catastrophes may be affirmed with certainty. Life in the imperial palace was no longer possible, especially for women, with this madman who was trans-

forming Rome into Alexandria and who wished to marry a sister. Even Tiberius, the son of Drusus and co-heir to the empire with Caligula, was at about this time defeated in some obscure suit and disappeared.

Caligula therefore remained alone at Rome to represent in the imperial palace the family which only ironically can be considered as the most fortunate in Rome. Of three generations, upon whom fate seemed to have showered all the gifts of life, there remained at his side only Claudius, the clownish old man, the plaything of slaves and freedmen, whom no one molested because all could make game of him. A madman and an imbecile,—or at least one who was reputed such by everybody,—this was all that remained of the family of Augustus seventy years after the battle of Actium.

Alone, with no sisters now to elevate to the divine honors of the Roman Olympus, Caligula was reduced to hunting for wives in the families of the aristocracy. But it seems that even there could be found no great abundance of women who had all the necessary qualities to

make them the Olympian consorts of so capricious a god. In three years he married and repudiated three—and in a very strange manner, if we are to trust the ancient accounts of Caligula's loves. The first was Livia Orestilla, the wife of Caius Piso. The emperor, who had seen the woman at the marriage celebration, became, we are told, so infatuated with her that he obliged the husband to divorce her; he then married her, and a few days later repudiated her. Caligula is said to have compared himself on this occasion to Romulus who ravished the Sabine woman, and to Augustus who raped Livia. The second was Lollia Paulina, wife of Caius Memmius, proconsul of a distant province. Caligula heard of the prodigious beauty of Lollia's grandmother. The portrayal of her charms made him fall in love with her granddaughter, though absent and distant. He gave orders for her immediate recall to Rome, and as soon as she could be divorced from her husband he married her. This union, like the former one, lasted only a brief time. The third wife was Milonia Cæso-

From the statue in the Museo Nazionale, Naples

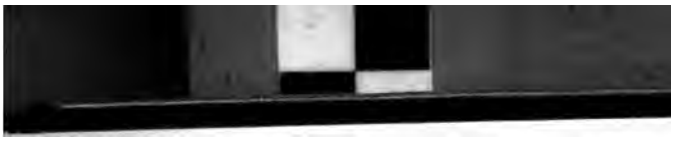
THE EMPEROR CALIGULA

nia, and to her Caligula was more faithful, though from the accounts of ancient writers she appears to have been much older than he, rather homely, and already a mother of three daughters when he first loved her. It is difficult to determine how much truth there is in these reports: Caligula was, it is true, a raving maniac, and his frenzy became more accentuated when under the sway of love—a passion which deranges somewhat even wise men. It is not strange, therefore, that in regard to women he may have been guilty of even greater excesses than he was capable of in his dealings with men. Yet some of these accounts seem a little incredible even when ascribed to a madman. However that may be, Livia Orestilla, Lollia Paulina, Milonia Cæsonia are figures without relief, shades and ghosts of empresses, no one of whom had time enough even to occupy the highest post. In vain the people expected that there would appear in the imperial palace a worthy successor to Livia. Caligula, like all madmen, was by nature solitary, and could not live with other human beings: he was to re-

Could the senate, neglected, divided, and disregarded as it was, succeed in governing the immense empire? On the other hand, it was not much easier to find an emperor, granted that an emperor was henceforth necessary. In the family of Augustus there was only Claudius, too foolish and ridiculous for them to think of making him the head of the state. It seems that some eminent senator offered his candidacy, but the senate hesitated in perplexity, on the ground that if the authority of the members of the family of Augustus was already so uncertain, so debatable, and so darkly threatened, what would happen to a new emperor, unknown to the legions and the provinces, and unsupported by the glory of his ancestors? While the senate was debating in such uncertainty, the pretorians discovered Claudius in a corner of the imperial palace, where he had been cowering through fear lest he too be killed. Recognizing in him the brother of Germanicus, the pretorians proclaimed him emperor. An act of will is always more powerful than a thousand scruples or

CLAUDIUS

From the bust in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence



hesitations: the senate yielded to the legions, and recognized Claudius the imbecile as emperor.

But Claudius was not an imbecile, although he appeared such to many. Instead, he was, so to speak, a man half-grown, in whom certain parts of the mind were highly developed, but whose character had remained that of a child, timid, capricious, impulsive, giddy, and incapable of self-mastery. In intellect he was learned, even cultivated; he was fond of studies, of history, literature, and archæology, and spoke and wrote well. But Augustus had been forced to give up the attempt to have him enter upon a political career because he had been unable to make him acquire even that exterior bearing which confers the necessary dignity upon him who exercises great power, to say nothing of the firmness, precision, and force of will required in governing men. Credulous, timorous, impressionable, and at the same time obstinate, gluttonous, and sensual, this erudite, overgrown boy had become in the imperial palace a kind of plaything for

everybody, especially for his slaves, who, knowing his defects and his weaknesses, did with him what they wished.

He did not lack the intellectual qualities necessary for governing well, but of the moral qualities he had none. He was intelligent, and he looked stupid: he was able to consider the great questions of politics, war, and finance with breadth of view, with original and acute intelligence, but he never succeeded in having himself taken seriously by the persons who surrounded him. He dared undertake great projects, like the conquest of Britain, and he lost his head at the wildest fable about conspiracy which one of his intimates told him; he had mind sufficient to govern the empire as well as Augustus and Tiberius had done, but he could not succeed in getting obedience from four or five slaves or from his own wife.

Such a man was destined to turn out a rather odd emperor, at once great and ridiculous. He made important laws, undertook gigantic public works and conquests of great moment; but in his own house he was a weak husband, in-

capable of exercising any sort of authority over his wife. With these conjugal weaknesses he seriously compromised the imperial authority, while at the same time he was consolidating it and rendering it illustrious with beautiful and wise achievements, especially in the first seven years of his rule, while he lived with Valeria Messalina.

We must admit in his justification that in this matter he had not been particularly fortunate; for fate had given him to wife a lady who, notwithstanding her illustrious ancestors,—she belonged to one of the greatest families of Rome, related to the family of Augustus,—was not exactly suited to be his companion in the imperial dignity. Every one knows that the name of Valeria Messalina has become in history synonymous with all the faults and all the vices of which a woman can be guilty. This, as usual, is the result of envy and malevolence which never offered truce to the family of Augustus as long as any of its members lived. Many of the infamies which are attributed to her are evidently fables, com-

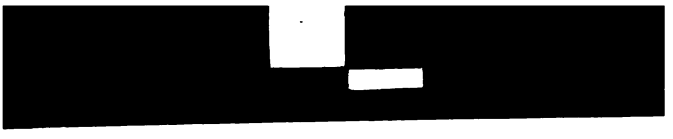
placently repeated by Tacitus and Suetonius, and easily believed by posterity. But it is certain that if Messalina was not a monster, she was a beautiful woman, capricious, gay, powerful, reckless, avid of luxury and of money, who had never scrupled to abuse the weakness of her husband in any way either by deceiving him or by obliging him to follow her will and her caprice in everything. She was a woman, in short, neither very virtuous nor serious. There are such women at all times and in all social classes, and they are generally considered by the majority not as monsters, but as a pleasing, though dangerous, variety of the feminine sex. Under normal conditions, nevertheless, when the husband exercises a certain energy and sagacity, even the danger which may result from them is relatively slight.

But chance had made of Messalina an empress, and Messalina was not a sufficiently intelligent or serious woman to understand that if she had been able to abuse the weakness of Claudius with impunity while he had been the

most obscure member of the imperial family, it was a much more difficult matter to continue to abuse it after he had become the head of the state. It was from this error that all their difficulties arose. Elated by her new position, Messalina more than ever took advantage of her husband's infirmity. She began by starting new dissensions in the imperial family. Claudius had recalled to Rome the two victims of Caligula's Egyptian caprices, Agrippina and Julia Livilla; but if the latter no longer found a brother in Rome to persecute them, they did find their aunt, and they had gained but little by the exchange. Messalina soon took umbrage at the influence which the two sisters acquired over the mind of their weak-willed uncle, and it was not long before Julia Livilla was accused under the *Lex de adulteriis,* and exiled with Seneca, the famous philosopher, whom they wished rightly or wrongly to pass off as her lover. Agrippina, like her mother, was a virtuous woman, as is proved by the fact that she could not be attacked with such weapons and was enabled to

remain in Rome; though she also had to live prudently and beware of her enemy, and much the more as she had only recently become a widow and could therefore not even count upon the protection of a husband. Though Agrippina remained at Rome, she was isolated and reduced to a position of helplessness.

Messalina alone, together with four or five intelligent and unscrupulous freedmen, hedged Claudius about, and there began the period of their common government—a government of incredible waste and extortion. Among these freedmen there were, to be sure, men like Narcissus and Pallas, intelligent and sagacious, who did not aim merely at putting money into their purses, but who helped Claudius to govern the empire properly. Messalina, on the other hand, thought only of acquiring wealth, that she might dissipate it in luxury and pleasures. The wife of the emperor had been selling her influence to the sovereign allies and vassals, to all the rich personages of the empire, who desired to obtain any sort of favor



from the imperial authority; she had been seen bartering with the contractors for public works, mingling in the financial affairs of the state every time that there was any occasion to make money. And with the money thus amassed she indulged in ostentatious displays which violated all the prohibitions of the *Lex sumptuaria,* leading a life of unseemly pleasures, in which it is easy to imagine what sort of example of all the finer feminine virtues she set. Claudius either knew nothing of all this or else submitted without protest.

Messalina then, with her peculiar levity of character and violence of temperament, continued to emphasize the modernizing Asiatic tendency introduced by Caligula into the state, and was influential in destroying the puritanic traditions of Rome and replacing them by the corruption and pomp of Asia. Her rôle was exactly the opposite of that of Livia. The latter had been the embodiment of the conservative virtues of traditionalism: the former by her egoism, her extravagance, and her wantonness was in a fair way to destroy all such tra-

ditions. Livia had been almost a vestal in her fight for the puritanism of old Rome: Messalina most ardently and violently fought to destroy it.

Such an empress, however, could hardly please the public. While those who profited by her dissipations greatly admired Messalina, a lively movement of protest was soon started among the people, for they, unlike many of the aristocrats, who affected modern views and who pretended to scorn the traditions of ancient Rome, were faithful to all such puritanical traditions and wished to see at their emperor's side a lady adorned with all the fairer virtues of the ancient matron—with those virtues, in short, which Livia had personified with such dignity. How could they tolerate this sort of dissipated Bacchante, who should have been condemned to infamy and exile with the many other Roman women who had been faithless to their husbands; who with the effrontery of her unpunished crimes dishonored and rendered ridiculous the imperial authority?

To the middle classes the emperor was a semi-

From the bust in the Vatican Museum

THE EMPEROR CLAUDIUS

sacred magistrate, charged with maintaining by law and example the purity of the family, fidelity in marital relations, and simplicity of customs. Now, to their amazement, they saw in the person of the empress all the dissipations, corruptions, and perversions of the woman who wished to live only for her pleasure, to enjoy her beauty, and to have others enjoy it, enthroned, to the scandal of all honest minds, in the palace of the emperor. Furthermore, it seemed to every one a scandal that one who was an emperor should at the same time be a weak husband; for the simple good sense of the Latin would not admit that a man who could govern an empire should not be able to command a woman. It soon became the general opinion of all reasonable people that Messalina, in the position of Livia upon the Palatine, and with so weak a husband, was not only a scandal, but also a continual menace to the public.

Nevertheless, it would now have been no easy matter, even if the emperor had wished it, to convict an empress of infidelity and dis-

obedience to one of the great laws of Augustus. Caligula was a madman and had been able to secure three divorces, but a wiser emperor would have to think for a long time before rendering public the shame and scandals of his family, especially when confronted with an aristocracy which was as eager to suspect and calumniate as was the aristocracy of Rome. But the problem became hopeless as soon as the emperor did not see or did not wish to see the faults of his wife. Would any one dare to step forward and accuse the empress?

The situation gradually became grave and dangerous. The state, governed with intelligence, but without energy, with vast contradictions and hesitations, was being strengthened along certain lines and was going to pieces along others. The power and extortions of the freedmen were breeding discontent on every hand. Both through what she really did, and what the populace said she had done, Messalina was being transformed by the people into a legendary personage whose infamous deeds aroused general indignation; but all in vain.

It now became quite evident that an empress was virtually invulnerable, and that, once enthroned upon the Palatine, there was no effective means of protesting against the various ways in which she could abuse her lofty position unless the emperor wished to interfere. In its exasperation, the public finally vented upon Claudius the anger which the violence and misconduct of Messalina had aroused. They declared that it was his weakness which was responsible for her conduct; and intrigues, deeds of violence, conspiracies, and attempts at civil war became, as Suetonius says, every-day occurrences at Rome.

A sense of insecurity and doubt was spreading throughout the state as a result of the indecision of the emperor, and all began to ask themselves how long a government could last which was at the mercy of a wanton. The violent death of Caligula, which was still fresh in the minds of the people, added to this widespread feeling of insecurity and alarm. As Caligula, notwithstanding the pontifical sacredness of his person, had been slain, to the ap-

parent satisfaction of everybody, in his palace by a handful of his supposed friends and supporters, it seemed possible that the tragedy might easily be repeated in the case of Claudius. Could not the whole Claudian government be overturned,—in a single night, perhaps, as that of Caligula had been overturned? All hearts were filled with suspicion, distrust, and alarm, and many concluded that since Claudius had not succeeded in ridding the empire of Messalina it would be well to rid it of Claudius.

So for seven years Messalina remained the great weakness of a government which possessed signal merits and accomplished great things. Of all the emperors in the family of Augustus, Claudius was certainly the one whose life was most seriously threatened, especially because of his wife. Such a situation could not endure.

It finally resolved itself into a tragic scandal, which, if we could believe Suetonius and Tacitus, would certainly have been the most monstrous extravagance to which an imagina-

From the bust in the Capitoline Museum

MESSALINA, THIRD WIFE OF CLAUDIUS

tion depraved by power could have abandoned itself. According to these writers, Messalina, at a loss for some new form of dissipation, one fine day took it into her head to marry Silius, a young man with whom she was very much in love, who belonged to a distinguished family, and who was the consul-designate. According to them, for the pleasure of shocking the imperial city with the sacrilege of a bigamous union, she actually did marry him in Rome, with the most solemn religious rites, while Claudius was at Ostia! But is this credible, at least without admitting that Messalina had suddenly gone insane? To what end and for what reason would she have committed such a sacrilege, which struck at the very heart of popular sentiment? Dissolute, cruel, and avaricious Messalina certainly was, but mad she was not. And even if we are willing to admit that she had gone mad, is it conceivable that all those who would have had to lend her their services in the staging of this revolting farce had also gone mad? It is difficult to suppose that they acted through fear, for the empress had no

such power in Rome that she could constrain conspicuous persons publicly to commit such sacrilege.

This episode would probably be an unfathomable enigma had not Suetonius by chance given us the key to its solution: "Nam illud omnem fidem excesserit, quod nuptiis, quas Messalina cum adultero Silio fecerat, tabellas dotis et ipse consignaverit" ("For that which would pass all belief is the fact that in the marriage which Messalina contracted with the adulterer Silius, he himself [Claudius] should have signed the figures for the dowry"). If Claudius himself gave a dowry to the bride, he therefore knew that the marriage of Messalina and Silius was to take place; and it is precisely this fact which seems so incredible to Suetonius. But we know that in the Roman aristocracy a man could give away his own wife in this manner; for have we not recounted in this present history how Livia was dowered and given in marriage to Augustus by her first husband, the grandfather of Claudius? The deeding of a wife with a dowry

was a part of the somewhat bizarre marriage customs of the Roman aristocracy, which gradually lost ground in the first and second century of our era in proportion as the prestige and power of that aristocracy declined, and in proportion as the middle classes acquired influence in the state and succeeded in imposing upon it their ideas and sentiments. The passage in Suetonius proves to us that he no longer understood this matrimonial custom, and it is doubtful whether even Tacitus thoroughly understood it. Nor is it improbable that it should have seemed strange even to many of the contemporaries of Claudius. We could therefore explain how, not really understanding what had happened, the historians of the following century should have believed that Messalina had married Silius while she was still the wife of Claudius.

In short, Claudius had been persuaded to divorce Messalina and to marry her to Silius. The passage from Suetonius, if carefully interpreted, clearly tells us this. What means were employed to persuade Claudius to con-

sent to this new marriage we do not know. Suetonius refers to this, but he is not clear. In any case, this point is less important than that other question: Why was Messalina, after seven years of empire, willing to divorce Claudius and marry Silius? The problem is not an easy one, but after long examination I have decided to accept with slight modification the explanation given by Umberto Silvagni in his beautiful work, "The Empire and the Women of the Cæsars," a book which contains many original ideas and much acute observation.

Silvagni, who is an excellent student of Roman history, has well brought out how Silius belonged to a family of the aristocracy famous for its devotion to the party of Germanicus and Agrippina. His father, who had been a great friend of Germanicus, had been one of the victims of Sejanus, and accused in the time of Tiberius under the law of high treason, he had committed suicide. His mother, Sosia Galla, had been condemned to exile on account of her devotion to Agrippina. Starting out with these considerations, and

From a photograph by Anderson of the bust in the Museo Nazionale

THE PHILOSOPHER SENECA

examining acutely the accounts of all the ancient historians, Silvagni concluded that behind this marriage there lay a conspiracy to ruin Claudius and to put Caius Silius in his place. Messalina must sooner or later have felt that the situation was an impossible one, that Claudius was not a sufficiently strong or energetic emperor to be able to impose the disorganized government of himself and his freedmen upon the empire, and that any day he might fall a prey to a plot or an assassination. What would happen, she must have asked herself, if Claudius, like Caligula, should some day be despatched by a conspiracy? The same fate would doubtless be waiting for her, for, having killed him, the conspirators would certainly murder her also. Consequently she entertained the idea of ruining the emperor herself in order to contribute to the elevation of his successor, and thus to preserve at his side the position which she had occupied in the court of Claudius. But once Claudius had been slain, there would be no other member of the family of Augustus old enough to govern. She

therefore decided to choose him in a fa famous for its devotion to Germanicus and more popular branch of the house, thus l ing the more easily to win over the legions the pretorians to the cause of the new empe Since the descendants of Drusus were d what other option remained to her than choose a successor in the families of the a tocracy who had shown for them the grea devotion and love?

Thus, for the first time, a woman was pla at the head of a really vast political conspir destined to wrest the supreme power from family of Augustus; and this woman pro her sagacity by knowing how to organize t great plot so well and so opportunely that most intelligent and influential among freedmen of Claudius debated for a long ti whether they would join her or throw in th lot with the emperor. So doubtful seemed t issue of this struggle between the weak h band and the energetic, audacious, and u scrupulous wife! They allowed Messalina a Silius to enlist friends and partizans in eve

part of Roman society, to come to an understanding with the prefect of the guards, to obtain the divorce from Claudius, even to celebrate their marriage, without opening the eyes of the emperor. Claudius would probably have been destroyed if at the last moment Narcissus had not decided to rush to the emperor, who was at Ostia, and, by terrifying him in some unspeakable way, had not induced him to stamp out the conspiracy with a bold and unexpected stroke. There followed one of those periods of judicial murder which for more than thirty years had been costing much Roman blood, and in this slaughter Messalina, too, was overthrown.

After the discovery of the conspiracy, Claudius made a harangue to the soldiers, in which he told them that as he had not been very successful in his marriages he did not intend to take another wife. The proposal was wise, but difficult of execution, for there were many reasons why the emperor needed to have a woman at his side. We very soon find Claudius consulting his freedmen on the choice of

a new wife. There was much discussion and uncertainty, but the choice finally fell upon Agrippina. That choice was significant. Agrippina was the niece of Claudius, and marriages between uncle and niece, if not exactly prohibited, were looked upon by the Romans with a profound revulsion of feeling. Claudius and his freedmen could not have decided to face this repugnance except for serious and important reasons. Among these the most serious was probably that after the experience with Messalina, it seemed best not to go outside the family. An empress belonging to the family would not be so likely to plot against the descendants of Augustus as had been this strange woman, who belonged to one of those aristocratic families who deeply hated the imperial house. Agrippina, furthermore, was the daughter of Germanicus. This was a powerful recommendation with the people, the pretorian cohorts, and the legions. In addition, she was intelligent, cultured, simple, and economical; she had grown up in the midst of political affairs, she knew how the empire was

governed, and up to this point she had lived a life above reproach. She seemed to be the woman above all others destined to make the people forget Messalina and to reëstablish among the masses respect for the family of Augustus, now seriously compromised by many scandals and dissensions. Furthermore, she did not seem to suffer too much by comparison with Livia.

Claudius asked the senate to authorize marriages between uncles and nieces, as he did not dare to assume the responsibility of going counter to public sentiment. And thus the daughter of Germanicus and the sister of Caligula became an empress.

VI

AGRIPPINA, THE MOTHER OF NERO

It is possible, as Tacitus says, that marriage with Claudius was the height of Agrippina's ambition, but it is also possible that it was an act of supreme self-sacrifice on the part of a woman who had been educated in the traditions of the Roman aristocracy, and who therefore considered herself merely a means to the political advancement of her relatives and her children.

I am rather inclined to accept this second explanation. When she married Claudius, Agrippina not only married an uncle who was much older than herself, and who must necessarily prove a rather difficult and disagreeable husband, but she bound up her fate with that of a weak emperor whose life was continually threatened by plots and revolts, and whose hesitations and terrors plainly portended that he

would one day end by precipitating the imperial authority and government into some bizarre and terrible catastrophe. For Agrippina it meant that she was blindly staking her life and her honor, and that she would lose them both should she fail to compensate for the innumerable deficiencies of her strange husband through her own intelligence and strength of will. Every one will recognize how difficult was the task which she had undertaken.

But at the beginning fortune favored Agrippina as she boldly took up the work that lay before her. The wild pranks of Caligula and the scandals of Messalina had aroused an immeasurable disgust in Rome and Italy. Every one was out of patience. The senate as well as the people were demanding a stronger, more coherent, and respectable government, which would end the scandals, suits, and atrocious personal and family quarrels which were dividing Rome. Agrippina was the daughter of Germanicus, the granddaughter of Drusus, and she had in her veins the blood of the Claudii, with all their pride, their energy, their puri-

tanical, conservative, and aristocratic spirit, and the moment she appeared, all hopes were centered in her. Although she was a sort of feminine Tiberius, and in the purity of her life resembled her mother and her great-grandmother Livia, Tacitus nevertheless maligns her for her relationships with Pallas and Seneca. The fact that Messalina, even with her implacable hatred, failed to bring about her downfall under the *Lex de adulteriis*, proves the unreliability of these statements, and Tacitus proves it himself when he says that she suffered no departure from chastity unless it helped her power (*Nihil domi impudicum nisi dominationi expediret*). This means that Agrippina was a lady of irreproachable life; for if there is one thing which stands out clearly in the history of this remarkable woman, it is that both her rise and her fall depended upon causes of such a nature that not even her womanly charms could have increased her power or retarded her ruin. All hearts were therefore filled with hope when they saw this respectable, active, and energetic woman take her place at

From a photograph by Alinari of the bust in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence

THE EMPEROR NERO

the side of Claudius the weakling, for she brought back the memory of the most venerated personages of the family of Augustus.

The new empress, encouraged by this show of favor, applied herself with all the strength of her impassioned nature to the task of again making operative in the state those traditional ideas of the nobility in which Livia had educated first Tiberius and Drusus, then Germanicus, and then Agrippina herself. In this descendant of hers the spirit of the great-grandmother finally reappeared, for it had been eclipsed by the fatal and terrible struggle between Tiberius and Agrippina, by the madness of Caligula, and the comic scandals of the first part of the reign of Claudius. All this served to bring back into the state a little of that authoritative vigor which the nobility in the time of its splendor had considered the highest ideal of government. Tacitus says of her rule that it was as rigid as if a man's (*adductum et quasi virile*). This signifies that under the influence of Agrippina the laxity and disorder of the first years of Claudius's reign gave place to

a certain order and discipline. Severity there was, and more often haughtiness (*palam severitas ac saepius superbia*). The freedmen who had formerly been so powerful and aggressive, now stepped aside, which is an evident sign that their petulance had now found a check in the energy of Agrippina. The state finances and the fortune of the imperial house were reorganized, for Agrippina, like Livia and like all the ladies of the great Roman nobility, was an excellent administrator, frugal, and ever watchful of her slaves and freedmen, and careful of all items of income and expense. The Roman aristocracy, like all other aristocracies, hated the parvenus, the men of sudden riches, traffickers who had too quickly become wealthy, and all persons whose only aim was to amass money. We know that Agrippina sought to prevent as far as possible the malversations of public funds by which the powerful freedmen of Claudius had been enriching themselves. After she became empress we hear accounts of numerous suits instituted against personages who had been guilty of

wasting public treasure, while under Messalina no such cases were brought forward. We know, furthermore, that she reëstablished the fortune of the imperial family, which in all probability had been seriously compromised by the reckless expenditures of Messalina. This is what Tacitus refers to in one of his sentences, which, as usual, is colored by his malignity: *Cupido auri immensa obtentum habebat quasi subsidium regno pararetur* (She sought to enrich the family under the pretext of providing for the needs of the empire). What Tacitus calls a "pretext" was, on the contrary, the ancient aristocratic conception of wealth, which in the eyes of the great families was destined to be a means of government and an instrument of power: the family possessed it in order to use it for the benefit of the state.

In short, Agrippina attempted to revive the aristocratic traditions of government which had inspired the policies of Augustus and Tiberius. Not only did she attempt to do this, but, strange as it may seem, she succeeded al-

most without a struggle. The government of Agrippina was from the first a great success. From the moment when she became empress there is discernible in the entire administration a greater firmness and consistency of policy. Claudius no longer seems, as formerly, to be at the mercy of his freedmen and the fleeting impulses of the moment, and even the dark shadows of the time are lighted up for some years. A certain concord and tranquillity returned to the imperial house, to the aristocracy, to the senate, and to the state. Although Tacitus accuses Agrippina of having made Claudius commit all sorts of cruelties, it is certain that trials, scandals, and suicide became much less frequent under her rule. During the six years that Claudius lived after his marriage with Agrippina, scandalous tragedies became so rare that Tacitus, being deprived of his favorite materials, set down the story of these six years in a single book. In other words, Agrippina encountered virtually no opposition, while Tiberius and even Augustus, when they wished to govern according to the

From a photograph by D. Alessandri of the statue in the Lateran Museum

AGRIPPINA THE YOUNGER, SISTER OF CALIGULA AND MOTHER OF NERO

traditions of the ancient nobility, had to combat the party of the new aristocracy, with its modern and oriental tendencies. This party no longer seemed to exist when Agrippina urged Claudius to continue resolutely in the policy of his ancestors, for one party only, that of the old nobility, seemed with Agrippina to control the state. This must have been the result partly of the disgust for the scandals of the previous decade, which had made every one realize the need of restoring more serious discipline in the government, and partly of the exhaustion which had come upon both parties as the result of so many struggles, reprisals, suits, and scandals. The force of the opposition in the two factions gradually diminished. A greater gentleness induced all to accept the direction of the government without resistance, and the authority of the emperor and his counselors acquired greater importance in proportion as the strength of the opposition in the aristocracy and the senate became gradually weaker.

In any case, the empire was no longer to

have forced upon it the ridiculous and scandalous spectacle of such weaknesses and incongruities as had seriously compromised the prestige of the highest authority in the first period of the reign of Claudius. But Agrippina was not content with merely making provision as best she could for the present; she also looked forward to the future. She had had a son by her first husband, and at the time of her marriage with Claudius this youth was about eleven years old. It is in connection with her plans for this son that Tacitus brings his most serious charges against Agrippina. According to his story, from the first day of her marriage Agrippina attempted to make of her son, the future Emperor Nero, the successor of Claudius, thereby excluding Britannicus, the son of Messalina, from the throne.

To obtain this end, she spared, he says, neither intrigues, fraud, nor deceit; she had Seneca recalled from exile and appointed tutor of her child. She removed from office the two commanders of the pretorian guard,

who were creatures of Messalina, and in their stead she had elected one of her own, a certain Afranius Burrhus. She laid pitfalls for Britannicus and surrounded him with spies, and in the year 50, by dint of much intrigue and many caresses, she finally succeeded in having Claudius adopt her son. But this whole story is merely a complicated and fantastic romance, embroidered about a truth which in itself is comparatively simple. Tacitus himself tells us that Agrippina was a most exacting mother; that is, a mother of the older Roman type—in his own words, *trux et minax.* She did not follow the gentle methods of the newer education, which were gradually being introduced into the great families, and she had brought up her son in the ancient manner with the greatest simplicity. It is well to keep in mind, furthermore, that neither Britannicus nor Nero had any right to the throne of Claudius. The hereditary principle did not yet exist in the imperial government: the senate was free to choose whomsoever it wished. To be sure, up to that time the choice had always

fallen upon a member of the Augustan family; but it had only been because it was easier to find there persons who were known and respected, who commanded the admiration of the soldiers in distant regions, and who had received a certain preparation for the diverse and often difficult duties of their office. And it was precisely for this reason that Augustus and Tiberius had always sought to prepare more than one youth for the highest office, both in order that the senate might have a certain freedom of choice, and also that there might be some one in reserve, in case one of these young men should disappoint the hopes of the empire or should die prematurely, as so many others had died. That she should have persuaded Claudius to adopt her son does not mean, therefore, that she wished to set Britannicus aside and give the advantage to Nero. It merely proves that she did not wish the family of Augustus to lose the supreme power, and for this reason she intended to prepare not only one successor, but two possible successors, to Claudius, just as Augustus had for a

From the statue in Rome

BRITANNICUS

long time trained both Drusus and Tiberius.

In order to understand how wise and reasonable the conduct of Agrippina really was, we must also remember that Nero was four years older than Britannicus, and that, therefore, in the year 50, when Nero was adopted, Britannicus was a mere lad of nine. As Claudius was already sixty, it would have been most imprudent to designate a nine-year-old lad as his only possible successor, when Nero, who was four years his senior, would have been better prepared than Britannicus to take up the reign. There is a further proof that Agrippina had no thought of destroying the race of Claudius and Messalina, for before his adoption she had married Nero to Octavia, the daughter of the imperial pair. Octavia was a woman possessed of all the virtues which the ancient Roman nobility had cherished. She was chaste, modest, patient, gentle, and unselfish, and she would be able to assist in strengthening the power of her house. Agrippina had therefore, in the ancient manner, affianced the young pair

at an early age, and hoped that she might make a couple which would serve as an example to the families of the aristocracy.

In short, Agrippina, far from seeking to weaken the imperial house by destroying the descendants of Messalina, was attempting to bring her son into the family precisely for the purpose of giving it strength. And, sensible woman that she was, she could hardly have acted otherwise. She had seen the family of Augustus, once so prosperous, reduced to a state of exhaustion and virtually destroyed by the fatal discord between her mother and Tiberius and the quarrels between her brothers. The state had suffered greatly through the madness of Caligula and the reckless hatred of the first Agrippina, and the present empress, her daughter, who was not merely fond of her son, but endowed in addition with the gift of reflection, sought as far as possible to make amends for the evils which had unconsciously been wrought. The hopes of the future were henceforth to abide in Britannicus and in Nero. In Agrippina there reappeared the wisdom of

her greatest predecessors, and the people were so well satisfied that they conferred upon her the very highest honor, such as in her time even Livia herself had not received. She was given the title Augusta; she was allowed to ride into the precincts of the Capitol in a gilded coach (*carpentum*), though this was an honor which in old time had been conceded only to priests and to the images of the gods. This last descendant of Livia and Drusus, in whom the virtues of a venerated past seemed to reappear, was surrounded by a semi-religious adoration. This is an evidence of sincere and profound respect, for though the Romans often showered marks of human adulation upon their potentates, it was not often that they bestowed honors of so sacred a character.

The unforeseen death of Claudius suddenly cut short the work which Agrippina had well under way. Claudius was sixty-four years old, and one night in the month of October of the year 54 he succumbed to some mysterious malady after a supper of which, as usual, he had partaken inordinately. Tacitus pretends to

know that Agrippina had secretly administered poison to Claudius in a plate of mushrooms. During the night, however, fearing lest Claudius would survive, she had called Claudius's physician, Xenophon, who was a friend of hers. The latter, while pretending to induce vomiting, had painted his throat with a feather dipped in a deadly poison, and had killed him. This version is so strange and improbable that Tacitus himself does not dare affirm it, but says that "many believe" that it was in this manner that Claudius met his death. But if there are still people credulous enough to believe that the head of a great state can be poisoned in the twinkling of an eye by a doctor who brushes his throat with a feather, it is more difficult to understand what grounds Agrippina could have had for poisoning her husband. According to Tacitus, it was because she was disturbed by the fact that Claudius had for some time shown that he preferred Britannicus to Nero; but even if the fact were true, as a motive it would be ridiculous. Augustus was much fonder of Germanicus than he was of

Tiberius; and yet at his death the senate chose Tiberius, and not Germanicus, because at that moment the situation clearly called for the former as head of the empire. When Claudius died, Britannicus was thirteen and Nero seventeen years old. They were both, therefore, mere lads, and it was most probable that if the imperial seat fell vacant, the senate would choose neither, since they were both too young and inexperienced. This is so true that other historians have supposed, on the contrary, that Agrippina had fallen out with some one of the more powerful freedmen of Claudius, and seeing Claudius waver, had despatched him in order that she herself should not end like Messalina. But this hypothesis also is absurd. An empress was virtually invulnerable. Messalina had proved this, for she had committed every excess and abuse with impunity. Agrippina, protected as she was by the respect of all, invested with honors that gave her person a virtually sacred character, had nothing to fear either from the weak Claudius or from his powerful freedmen.

This accusation of poisoning, theref seems to be of precisely the same sort as, not a whit more serious than, all those o similar accusations which were brought aga the members of the Augustan family. C dius, who was already sixty-four, in all pı ability died a sudden but natural death, from the point of view of the interests of house of Augustus, which Agrippina strongly at heart, he died much too soon. was a dangerous and difficult matter to ask Roman senate to appoint one of these stripli commander of the armies and emperor, e though they were the only survivors of race of Augustus. So true is this that Taci tells us that Agrippina kept the death of Cl dius secret for many hours and pretended t the physicians were still struggling to s him, when in reality he was already dead, *d res firmando Neronis imperio componun* (while matters were being arranged to assu the empire to Nero). Consequently, if eve thing had to be hurried through in confusi at the last moment, it is plain that Agrippi

herself must have been taken by surprise by the illness and death of Claudius. She therefore cannot be held responsible for having caused it.

It is not, however, difficult to reconstruct the course of events. On the nights of the twelfth and thirteenth of October, soon after Claudius had been suddenly stricken down by his violent malady, the doctors announced to Agrippina that the emperor was lost. Agrippina immediately understood that since the family of Augustus could at that moment present no full-grown man as candidate for the imperial office, there was grave danger that the senate might refuse to confer the supreme power either upon Nero or Britannicus. The only means of avoiding this danger was to bring pressure to bear upon the senate through the pretorian cohorts, which were as friendly to the family of Augustus as the senate was hostile. She must present one of the two youths to the guards and have him acclaimed not head of the empire, but head of the armies. The senate would thereby be constrained to pro-

claim him head of the empire, as they had done in the case of Claudius.

But which one of the two youths was it best to choose, Claudius's son by blood or his son by adoption? Nero was chosen as the result of the unrighteous ambition of Agrippina, so Tacitus says. It is very probable that Agrippina was more eager to see her own son at the head of the empire than to see Britannicus there; but this does not seem to have been the real reason of her choice, for it could not have been otherwise, even if Agrippina had detested Nero and had cherished Britannicus with a maternal affection. Nero was four years older than Britannicus, and therefore he had to be given the preference over the latter. It was a very bold move to propose that the senate make a youth of seventeen emperor; it would have been nothing less than folly to ask that they accept a thirteen-year-old lad as commander-in-chief of the imperial armies of Rome.

Through the help of Seneca and Burrhus, the plan developed by Agrippina was carried out with rapidity and success. On the thir-

From a photograph Copyright by Alinari

STATUE OF AGRIPPINA THE YOUNGER, IN THE CAPITOLINE MUSEUM, ROME

teenth of October, after matters had been arranged with the troops, the doors of the imperial palace were thrown open at noon; Nero, accompanied by Burrhus, advanced to the cohort which was on guard. He was received with joyous welcome, placed in a litter, borne to the quarters of the pretorians, and acclaimed head of the army. The senate grudgingly confirmed his election. There resulted in Rome a most extraordinary situation: a youth of seventeen, educated in the antique manner, and, though already married, still entirely under the tutelage of a strict mother, had been elevated to the highest position in the immense empire. He was ignorant of the luxury, pleasure, and elegance which were becoming general in the great families; outside of a lively disposition and docility toward his mother, he had up to this point shown no special quality and no particular vice. Only one peculiarity had been noticed in him: he had studied with great zest music, painting, sculpture, and poetry, and had made himself proficient in these arts, which were considered

frivolous and useless for a Roman noble. On the contrary, he had neglected oratory, which was held a necessary art by an aristocracy like the Roman, whose duty it was to use speech at councils, in the tribunals, and in the senate, just as it used the sword on the fields of battle. But the majority believed that this was merely a passing caprice of youth.

AGRIPPINA, then, with the assistance of Seneca and Burrhus, had kept the highest office in the state in the family of Augustus, and she had done so by a bold move which had not been without its dangers. She was too intelligent not to foresee that a seventeen-year-old emperor could have no authority, and that his position would expose him to all sorts of envy and intrigue, and to open as well as secret opposition. She succeeded in mitigating this evil and in parrying this danger by another very happy suggestion—the virtually complete restoration of the old republican constitution. After the funeral of Claudius, Nero introduced himself to the senate, and in a polished and

modest discourse, seemingly intended to excuse his youth, he declared that of all the powers exercised by his predecessors he wished to keep only the command of the armies. All other civil, judicial, and administrative functions he turned over to the senate, as in the times of the republic.

This "restoration of the republic" was Agrippina's masterpiece, and marks the zenith of her power. It followed, as a result of her decision, that Nero, who was to go down to posterity as the most terrible of tyrants, was that one of all the Roman emperors who had the most limited power; and furthermore it was likewise the result of her activity that the constitution of the empire had never been so close to that of the ancient republic as under the government of Nero. Most historians, hallucinated by Tacitus, have not noticed this, and they have consequently not recognized that in carrying out this plan Agrippina is neither more nor less than the last continuator of the great political tradition founded by Augustus. In the minds of both Augustus and Tiberius

the empire was to be governed by the aristocracy. The emperor was merely the depositary of certain powers of the nobility conceded to him for reasons of state. If these reasons of state should disappear, the powers would naturally revert to the nobles. It was therefore expedient at this time to make the senate forget, in the presence of a seventeen-year-old emperor, the pressure which had been brought to bear upon it by the cohorts, and to wipe out the rancor against the imperial power which was still dormant in the aristocracy. This restoration was not, therefore, a sheer renunciation of privileges and powers inherent in the sovereign authority, but an act of political sagacity planned by a woman whose knowledge of the art of government had been received in the school of Augustus.

The move was entirely successful. The illusion that the imperial authority was only a transitory expedient made necessary by the civil wars, and that it might one day be entirely abolished, was still deeply grounded in the Roman aristocracy. Every relaxation of au-

From the statue in the Museo Nazionale, Naples

AGRIPPINA THE YOUNGER

thority was specially pleasing to the senatorial circles. The government of Nero therefore began under the most favorable auspices, with joyous hope in the general promise of concord. The disaffection which had been felt in the last six years of Claudius's government was changed into a general and confident optimism, which the first acts of the new government and the signs of the future seemed to justify. Agrippina continued to keep Nero subject to her authority, as she had done before the election: together with his two masters, Seneca and Burrhus, she suggested to him every word and deed. The senate resumed its ancient functions; and governed by Seneca, Burrhus, and Agrippina in conjunction with the senate, the empire seemed to be progressing wonderfully, and in the eyes of the senators the entire government was in a better way than it ever yet had been.

But the situation soon changed. Agrippina, to be sure, had given her son a strictly Roman education, and had brought him up with a simplicity and rigor long since out of fashion;

and though she had early given him a wife, she continued to keep him subject to maternal authority. But, with all this, it is doubtful if there ever was a temperament which rebelled against this species of education as strongly as did Nero's. His taste for the arts of drawing and singing, the indifference which he had shown for the study of oratory from his childhood, these were the seeds from which as time went on his raging exoticism was to be developed through the use and abuse of power. His was one of those rioting, contrary, and undisciplined temperaments which feel that they must do precisely the opposite of what tradition, education, and the general opinion of the society in which they live have prescribed as necessary and recognized as lawful. In the case of Nero the defects and the dangers in the ancient Roman education were to become apparent.

The first of these dangers declared itself when Nero entered upon one of those early marriages of which we have spoken in the first of these studies. Agrippina had early arranged

an alliance with a young lady who, because of her virtues, nobility of ancestry, and Roman education, might have become his worthy companion; but a year after his elevation to the imperial dignity, the eighteen-year-old youth made the acquaintance of a woman whose beauty inflamed his senses and imagination to the point of making him entirely forget Octavia, whom he had married from a sense of duty and not for love. This person was Acte, a beautiful Asiatic freedwoman, and the inexperienced, ardent youth, already given up to exotic fancies, became so enamoured that he one day proposed to repudiate Octavia and to marry Acte. But a marriage between Nero and Acte was not possible. The *Lex de maritandis ordinibus* prohibited marriages between senators and freedwomen. It was therefore natural that Agrippina should have opposed it with all her strength. She, the great-granddaughter of Livia, the granddaughter of Drusus, the daughter of Germanicus, educated in the strictest ideas of the old Roman aristocracy, could not permit her son to compromise the prestige of

the entire nobility in the eyes of the lower orders by so scandalous a *mésalliance.* But on this occasion the youth, carried away by his passion, resisted. If he did not actually repudiate Octavia, he disregarded her, and began to live with Acte as if she were his wife. Agrippina insisted that he give up this scandalous relationship; but in vain. The mother and son disagreed, and very shortly after having resisted his mother in the case of Acte, Nero began to resist her on other occasions. With increasing energy he shook off maternal authority, which up to that time he had accepted with docility.

This, however, was a crisis which was sooner or later inevitable. Agrippina had certainly made the mistake of attempting to treat Nero the emperor too much as she had treated Nero the child; but that the crisis should have been reached in this manner as the result of a love-affair, and that it should have provoked a misunderstanding between the mother and son that was soon to degenerate into hatred, was most unfortunate. Agrippina, though she en-

From the bust in Rome

THE EMPEROR NERO

joyed great prestige, had also many hidden enemies. Everybody knew that she represented in the government the old aristocratic, conservative, and economical tendency of the Claudii,—of Tiberius and of Drusus,—that she looked askance upon the development of luxurious habits, the relaxation of morals, and the increase of public and private expenditures. They understood that she exerted all her influence to prevent wastefulness, the malversation of public moneys, and in general all outlays for pleasures either in the state or the imperial family. Her virtues and her stand against Messalina had given her a great prestige, and the reverence which the emperor had shown for her had for a long time obliged her enemies to keep themselves hidden and to hold their peace. But this ceased to be the case after the incipient discord between her and Nero had allowed many to foresee the possibility of using Nero against her. In proportion as Nero became attached to Acte he drew away from his mother, and in proportion as he withdrew from his mother his capricious, fantastic, and

rebellious temper was encouraged to show itself in its true light. The party of the new nobility, with its modern and oriental tendencies, had for ten years been held in check by the preponderating influence of Agrippina. But gradually, as the exotic and anti-Roman inclinations of the emperor declared themselves, this party again became bolder. The memories of the scandals of Caligula and Messalina were becoming effaced by time, the rather severe and economical government of Agrippina was showing signs of weakening, and all minds were beginning to entertain a vague desire for something new.

The two parties which in the times of Augustus had rent Rome asunder were now being realined in the imperial house and in the senate—the party of the old nobility, which had Agrippina at its head, and the party of the modernizing nobility, which was gathering about the emperor and trying to claim him as its own. Tacitus clearly tells us that the older and more respectable families of the Roman nobility were with Agrippina; and even if he

had neglected to tell us so, we might easily have guessed it. For a moment the old, old struggle which had been the cause of so many tragedies in the upper classes of Rome seemed once more ready to break forth. But even though Agrippina was the soul of the party of the old nobility, the party needed a man whom it could oppose to Nero as a possible and better candidate for the imperial dignity.

Agrippina, like a true Roman matron of the old type, looked upon the family merely as an instrument of political power, and therefore subjected her personal affections to the public interest. She began to cast her eyes upon Britannicus, the son of Messalina, who was now becoming a young man and who seemed to be more serious-minded than Nero. It was even muttered that she thought of giving her own son's place to the son of Messalina, when suddenly, in 55, Britannicus died at a dinner at which Nero was present. Was he poisoned by Nero, as Tacitus says? Although there is no lack of obscurities and improbabilities in the account of Tacitus, this time the accusation, if

it is not true, is at least much more proba
than the other accusations of the same ki
It is certain that the report that Britannicus l
been poisoned was soon current at Rome, a
that it was believed; and the death of Britan
cus was likewise a fatal blow to Agrippina a
her party. Tacitus tells us that the death
Britannicus caused Agrippina great terror a
unspeakable consternation, and it is not di
cult to divine the reasons. Nero now remair
the last and only survivor of the family
Augustus, and it was therefore no longer p
sible to bring any effective opposition to b
upon him by setting up some other member
the family who would be capable of governi
The new nobility, with its modern tendenci
now rapidly gained strength, and the influen
of Agrippina declined proportionately.

As a result of the lofty qualities of geni
and character with which she had been e
dowed, Agrippina had been able to hold t
balance of power in the state as long as s
had succeeded in keeping the emperor und
her influence. This had been true in the cas

of both Claudius and Nero. After Nero escaped from her influence, or, rather, after he had turned against her, her prestige and her power rapidly diminished, and her party lost greatly in size and in power. Although personally the emperor was youthful and weak, the dignity of his office made him more powerful than all the members of his family, however energetic and intelligent they might be. At this period, furthermore, Nero was supported by an entire party which was daily increasing in strength and in numbers, for, as always happens in eras of prosperity and peace, the temper of the time was tending toward a milder, gentler, more liberal government, and consequently one which would be less authoritative and severe.

Agrippina, however, was an energetic woman, not easily discouraged, and she continued the struggle. Consequently for two years longer, even in the midst of strife, intrigues, and suspicions, she preserved a considerable influence, and was able to check the progress of the government in its new direction. This was either because Nero, though no longer ex-

actly obedient to his mother's will, was still too weak, too undecided, and too deeply involved in the ideas of his earlier education to attempt an open revolt against her, or it was because Seneca and Burrhus wisely sought to conciliate the ultra-conservative ideas of the mother with the newer tendencies of the son.

The definitive break with his mother and with her political ideas,—that is, with the ideas which had been professed by her ancestors,—came in 58, when Nero forgot Acte for Poppæa Sabina. The latter belonged to one of those great Roman families into which the new spirit and the new customs had most deeply penetrated. Rich, beautiful, avaricious of luxuries and pleasures, possessed of an unbridled personal ambition, she had attracted Nero to herself, and, in order to become empress, gave the uncertain youth the decisive impulse which was to transform the disciple of Agrippina and the grandson of Germanicus into the prodigal and dissolute emperor of history. She encouraged in him his desire to please the populace, and certainly never checked his love for Greece

and the Orient, which resulted finally in his mania of everywhere imitating the example of Asia and of taking up again, though to be sure less wildly, the policies of Caligula. Tacitus tells us that she continually reproved Nero for his simple customs, his inelegant manners, and his rude tastes. She held up to him, both as an example and as a reproach, the elegance and luxury of her husband, who was indeed one of the most refined and pompous members of the degenerate Roman nobility. Poppæa, in short, gave herself up to the task of reshaping the education of Nero and of destroying the results of Agrippina's patient labor. Nor was this all. She even became, with her restricted intelligence, his adviser in politics. She persuaded him that the policy of authority and economy which his mother had desired was rendering him unpopular, and she suggested the idea of a policy of liberality toward the people which would win him the affection of the masses. After he had fallen in love with Poppæa Sabina, Nero, who up to that time had shown no considerable initiative in affairs of state, elabo-

rated and proposed to the senate many revo
tionary projects for favoring the populace.
finally proposed that they abolish all the *ve*
galia of the empire; that is, all indirect tax
all tolls and duties of whatever sort. T
measure would certainly have been most po
lar, and there was much discussion about it
the senate; but the conservatives showed t
the finances of the empire would be ruined a
persuaded Nero not to insist. Nero, howev
wished to bring about some reform wh
would help the masses, and he gave orders
an edict that the rates of all the *vectigalia*
published; that at Rome the pretor, and in t
provinces the propretor and proconsul, shou
summarily decide all suits against the t
farmers and that the soldiers should be exem
from these same *vectigalia.*

Though some of these reforms were ju
this new policy was also the cause of the fir
rupture with his mother. Agrippina and Ne
to all intents and purposes, no longer saw ea
other, and Nero, on the few visits which
was obliged to pay her in order to save appea

From a drawing by André Castaigne

THE DEATH OF AGRIPPINA

ances, always arranged it so as never to be left alone in her presence. In this manner the influence of Agrippina continued to decline, while the popularity of Nero steadily increased as the result of his youth, of these first reforms, and of the hopes to which his prodigality had given rise. The public, whose memory is always brief, forgot what Agrippina had done and how she had brought back peace to the state, and began to expect all sorts of new benefits from Nero. Poppæa, encouraged by the increasing popularity of the emperor, insisted more boldly that Nero, in order to make her his wife, should divorce Octavia.

But Agrippina was not the woman to yield thus easily, and she continued the struggle against her son, against his paramour, and against the growing coterie which was gathering about the emperor. She opposed particularly the repudiation of Octavia, which, being merely the result of a pure caprice, would have caused serious scandal in Rome. But Nero was even now hesitating and uncertain. He still had too clearly before him the memory of the

long authority of his mother; he feared her too much to dare step forth in open and complete revolt. At last Poppæa understood that she could not become empress so long as the mother lived, and from that moment the doom of Agrippina was sealed. Poppæa was goaded on by all the new friends of Nero, who wished to destroy forever the influence of Agrippina, and by her words and deeds she finally brought him to the point where he decided to kill his mother.

But to murder his mother was both an abominable and dangerous undertaking, for it meant killing the daughter of Germanicus—killing that woman whom the people regarded with a semi-religious veneration as a portent of fortune; for she was the daughter of a man whom only a premature death had prevented from becoming the head of the empire, and she had been the sister, the wife, and the mother of emperors. For this reason the manner of her taking-off had been long debated in order that it might remain secret; nor would Nero make his decision until a seemingly safe means had

been discovered for bringing about the disappearance of Agrippina.

It was the freedman Anicetus, the commander of the fleet, who, in the spring of 59, made the proposal when Nero was with his court at Baiæ, on the Bay of Naples. They were to construct a vessel which, as Tacitus says, should open artfully on one side. If Nero could induce his mother to embark upon that vessel, Anicetus would see to it that she and the secret of her murder would be buried in the depths of the sea. Nero gave his consent to this abominable plan. He pretended that he was anxious to become reconciled with his mother, and invited her to come from Antium, where she then was, to Baiæ. He showed her all regard and every courtesy, and when Agrippina, reassured by the kindness of her son, set out on her return to Antium, Nero accompanied her to the fatal vessel and tenderly embraced her. It was a calm, starry night. Agrippina stood talking with one of her freedwomen about the repentance of her son and the reconciliation which had taken place, when, after

the vessel had drawn some distance away from the shore, the plotters tried to carry out their infernal plan. What happened is not very clear. The seemingly picturesque description of Tacitus is in reality vague and confusing. It appears that the ship did not sink so rapidly as the plotters had hoped, and in the confusion which resulted on board, the emperor's mother, ready and resolute, succeeded in making her escape by casting herself into the sea and swimming away, while the hired assassins on the ship killed her freedwoman, mistaking her for Agrippina.

In any case, it is certain that Agrippina arrived safely at one of her villas along the coast, with the help, it seems, of a vessel which she had encountered as she swam, and that she immediately sent one of her freedmen to apprise Nero of the danger from which she had escaped through the kindness of the gods and his good fortune! Agrippina had guessed the truth, but for this one time she gave up the struggle and sent her messenger, that it might be understood, without her saying so, that she

forgot and pardoned. Indeed, what means were left her, a lonely woman, of coping with an emperor who dared raise his hand against his own mother?

However, fear prevented Nero from understanding. No sooner had he learned that Agrippina had escaped than he lost his head. In his imagination he saw her hastening to Rome and denouncing the horrible matricide to the soldiers and the senate; and beside himself with terror, he sent for Seneca and Burrhus in order to take counsel with them. It is easy to imagine what the feelings of the two teachers of the youth must have been as they listened to the terrible story. Even they failed to understand that Agrippina recognized and declared herself conquered. They, too, feared that she would provoke the most frightful scandal which Rome had yet seen, and not knowing what advice to give, or rather seeing only a single way out, which was, however, too serious and horrible, they held their peace while Nero begged them to save him. At last Seneca, the humanitarian philosopher, turned to Bur-

rhus and asked him what would happen if the pretorians should be ordered to kill Agrippina. Burrhus understood that Seneca, though he was the first to give the terrible advice, yet wished to leave to him the more serious responsibility of carrying it into execution; for Burrhus, as commander of the guards, would have had to give the order for the murder. He therefore hastened to say that the pretorians would never kill the daughter of Germanicus, and then added that if they really wished to do away with Agrippina, the best plan would be for Anicetus to carry out the work which he had begun. His advice was the same as Seneca's, but he turned over to a third person the very grave responsibility for its execution. He had, however, chosen this third person more wisely than Seneca, for Anicetus could not refuse. If Agrippina lived, it was he who ran the risk of becoming the scapegoat for all this bloody and horrible adventure.

As a matter of fact, Anicetus accepted. The freedman whom Agrippina had sent to announce her misfortune was imprisoned and

put in chains, in order to convey the impression that he had been captured carrying concealed weapons and in the act of making an attempt upon the emperor's life by the order of his mother. Anicetus then hastened to the villa of Agrippina and surrounded it with a body of sailors. He entered the house, and with two officers rushed into the room where Agrippina, reclining upon a couch, was talking with a servant, and killed her. Tacitus tells us that when Agrippina saw one of the officers unsheathe his sword, she asked him to thrust her through the body which had borne her son.

Thus died the last woman of the house of Augustus, and, with the exception of Livia, the most remarkable feminine figure in that family. She died like a soldier, on duty and at her post, bravely defending the social and political traditions of the Roman aristocracy and the time-honored principles of Romanism against the influx of those new forces of a later age which were seeking to orientalize the ancient Latin republic. She died for her family, for her caste, and for Rome, without even having

the reward of being remembered with dutifu
regard by posterity; for in this struggle sh
had sacrificed not merely her life, but even he
honor and her fame. Such, furthermore, wa
the common destiny of all the members of th
family, and if we except Livia and Augustu
the privileged pair who founded it, we are at
loss to know whether to call it the most fortu
nate or the most unhappy of all the families o
the ancient world. It is impossible for the hi
torian who understands this terrible dram
filled with so many catastrophes, not to feel
certain impression of horror at the vindictiv
ferocity that Rome showed to this hous
which, in order to bring back Rome's peac
and to preserve her empire, had been fated t
exalt itself a few degrees above the ordinar
level of the ancient aristocracy. Men ar
women, the young and the old, the knaves ar
the large-hearted, the sages and the fools of th
family, alike, all without exception, were pe
secuted and plotted against. And again, if w
except the persons of the two founders, an
those who, like Drusus and Germanicus, ha

the good fortune to die young, Rome deprived them all, deprived even Antonia, of either their life or their greatness or their honor, and not infrequently it robbed them of all these three together. Those who, like Tiberius and Agrippina, defended the ancient Roman tradition, were hated, hounded, and defamed with a no less angry fury than Caligula and Nero, who sought to destroy it. No one of them, whatever his tendencies or intentions, succeeded in making himself understood by his times or by posterity; it was their common fate to be misunderstood, and therefore horribly calumniated. The destiny of the women was even more tragic than that of the men, for the times demanded from them, as a compensation for the great honor of belonging to this privileged family, that they possess all the rarest and most difficult virtues.

What was the cause of all this? we ask. How were so many catastrophes possible, and how could tradition have erred so grievously? It is almost a crime that posterity should virtually always have studied and pondered this im-

mense tragedy of history on the basis of the crude and superficial falsification of it which Tacitus has given us. For few episodes in general history impress so powerfully upon the mind the fact that the progress of the world is one of the most tragic of its phenomena. Especially is such knowledge necessary to the favored generations of prosperous and easy times. He who has not lived in those years when an old world is disappearing and a new one making its way cannot realize the tragedy of life, for at such times the old is still sufficiently strong to resist the assaults of the new, and the latter, though growing, is not yet strong enough to annihilate that world on the ruins of which alone it will be able to prosper. Men are then called upon to solve insoluble problems and to attempt enterprises which are both necessary and impossible. There is confusion everywhere, in the mind within and in the world without. Hate often separates those who ought to aid one another, since they are tending toward the same goal, and sympathy binds men together who are forced to do battle with

one another. At such times women generally suffer more than men, for every change which occurs in their situation seems more dangerous, and it is right that it should be so. For woman is by nature the vestal of our species, and for that reason she must be more conservative, more circumspect, and more virtuous than man. There is no state or civilization which has comprehended the highest things in life which has not been forced to instil into its women rather than into its men the sense for all those virtues upon which depend the stability of the family and the future of the race. And for every era this is a question of life and death. In such periods when one world is dying and another coming to birth, all conceptions become confused, and all attempts bring forth bizarre results. He who wishes to preserve, often destroys, so that virtue seems vice, and vice seems virtue. Precisely for this reason it is more difficult for a woman than for a man to succeed in fulfilling her proper mission, for she is more exposed to the danger of losing her way and of missing her particular function;

and since she is more likely to fail in realizing her natural destiny, she is more likely to be doomed to a life of misfortune.

Such was the fate of the family of Augustus, and such especially was the fate of its women. The strangers who visit Rome often go out on Sunday afternoons to listen to the excellent music that can be heard in a room which is situated in one of the little streets near the Piazza del Popolo and which used to be called the Corea. This hall was built over an ancient Roman ruin of circular form which any one can still see as he enters. That ruin is the entrance to the tomb which Augustus built on the Flaminian Way for himself and his family. Nearly all of the personages whose story we have told were buried in that mausoleum. If any reader who has followed this history should one day find himself at Rome, listening to a concert in that old Corea, which has now been renamed after the Emperor Augustus, let him give a thought to those victims of a terrible story of long ago, and may he remember that here, where at the beginning of the twen-

tieth century he listens to the flow of rivers of sweet sound—here only, twenty centuries ago, could the members of the family of Augustus find refuge from their tragic fate, and after so much greatness, resolved to dust and ashes, rest at last in peace.

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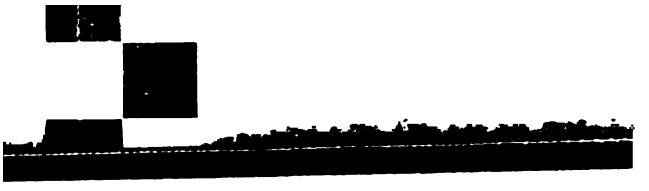

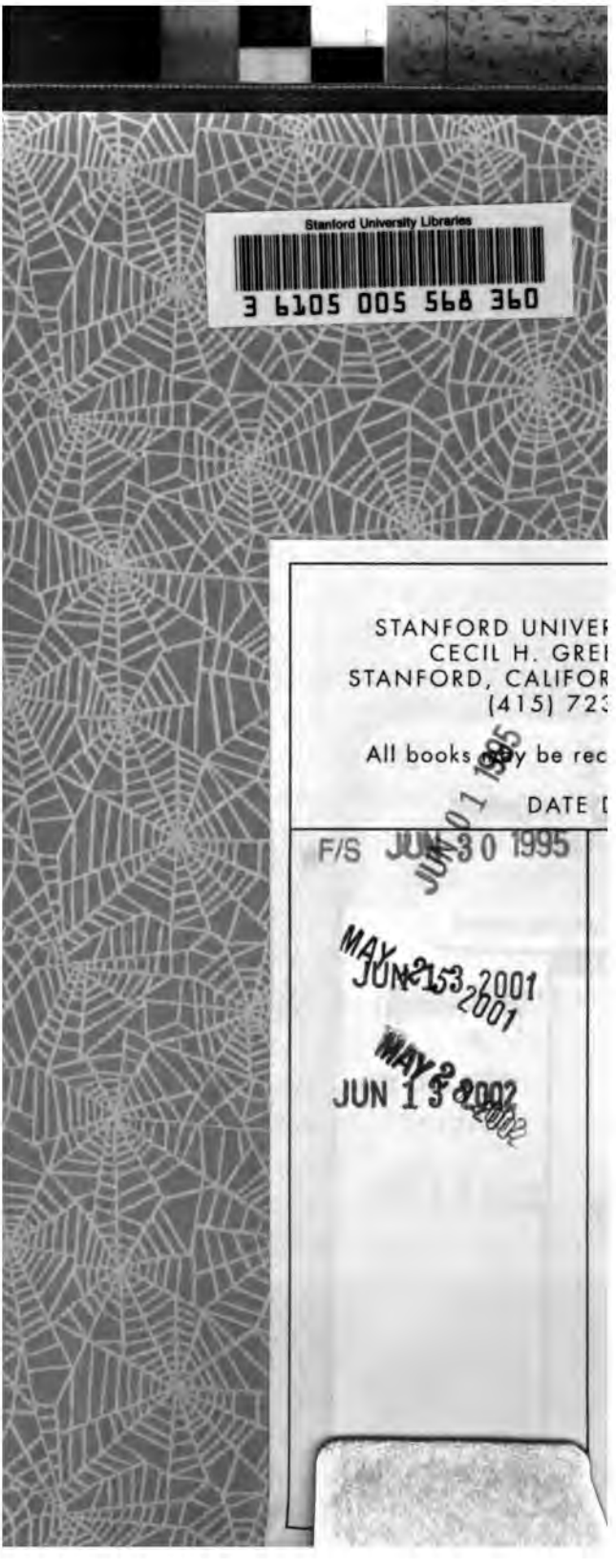

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